

TO KNOW THY ENEMY:
SOCIOLOGICAL INTELLIGENCE IN STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

BY

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APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis meets masters-level standards of research, argumentation, and expression.

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DISCLAIMER

The conclusions and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author. They do not reflect the official position of the US Government, Department of Defense, the United States Air Force, or Air University.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of sociological intelligence in strategy development. It proposes a methodological approach to examining the socio-cultural dynamics at work within an adversary society and makes recommendations to improve sociological intelligence collecting to enhance United States strategy. Strategy in ancient Rome and U.S. policy in Iraq are used as case studies to illustrate successful and unsuccessful techniques. By providing a scholarly and analytical framework for approaching the complex questions relating to sociological and cultural intelligence, this work gives policy makers, strategists, and intelligence personnel the insights they need to incorporate these critical facets of the enemy's essential dynamics into strategic and operational plans.

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Introduction

*Therefore I say: ‘Know the enemy and know yourself;
in a hundred battles you will never be in peril.*

*When you are ignorant of the enemy but know
yourself, your chances of winning or losing are equal.*

*If ignorant both of your enemy and of yourself, you are
certain in every battle to be in peril.’*

Sun Tzu
The Art of War

Sun Tzu’s *The Art of War* is the oldest known treatise on strategy and statecraft, yet his insights remain relevant more than two thousand years after its recording. His quotes feature prominently in military doctrine and festoon organizational briefing slides, yet many who casually pepper their products with Sun Tzu quotes fail to see the depth of integration between intelligence and strategy intended by the author. *The Art of War* is not a tactical manual for military operations; it is a poetic depiction of artful statecraft.¹ Sun Tzu’s concept of preferred strategy was to utilize guile and threat of force which could only be enabled by superb intelligence. Direct use of force was costly and to be avoided unless absolutely necessary. When he states that one must know the enemy he implies a far greater depth of knowledge than a cursory understanding of the enemy’s military force. When taken in context of his entire work, he is recommending a deep understanding of

¹ Sunzi and Samuel B. Griffith, *The Illustrated Art of War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 63.

the enemy as a people, of how they think and how they perceive the world around them. Though Sun Tzu identified the problem, he did not adequately develop a solution. A few thousand years later one might assume that this problem has been adequately resolved. It has not, and the costs of continued failure to do so have been high for the United States and its allies.

The conundrum of leveraging sociological intelligence in strategy development is thus the focus of this monograph. It provides a basic model for sociological analysis and recommends a process to utilize it in crafting effective strategy. Do we truly seek to know the enemy? How should the process work? Joint doctrine is a suitable place to start, and remarkably, it echoes many of Sun Tzu's sentiments. Joint Publication 2-0 *Joint Intelligence* states:

2. **Perspective** — (Think Like the Adversary)

Intelligence analysts must seek to understand the adversary's thought process, and should develop and continuously refine their ability to think like the adversary. They must offer this particular expertise for the maximum benefit of the [Joint Force Commander] JFC, joint staff elements, and component commands during planning, execution, and assessment. The JFC should require the [joint staff intelligence directorate] J-2 to assess all proposed actions from the following perspective: "How will the adversary likely perceive this action, and what are the adversary's probable responses?" A human factors analysis of adversary leaders assists in gaining insights into their probable responses. Carrying out these intelligence responsibilities calls for sound judgment as well as expertise.

- a. The ability to think like the adversary is predicated on a detailed understanding of the adversary's goals, motivations, objectives, strategy, intentions, capabilities, methods of operation, vulnerabilities, and sense of value and loss. Additionally, the J-2 must understand the culture, religions, sects, ethnicities, social norms, customs and traditions,

languages, and history of the adversary as well as neutrals and noncombatants in the operational environment. The ability of intelligence analysts to think and react like the adversary is of particular value during the wargaming of various [courses of action] COAs and the determination of enemy [high value targets] HVTs. Properly trained personnel formed in either structured or ad hoc red teams, can insure the enemy is appropriately portrayed and fought during the war game.

b. Understanding how an adversary will adapt to the environment, conceptualize the situation, consider options, and react to our actions, must be an inextricable part of a continuing interaction of the intelligence staff with the JFC and other staff elements. This comprehensive understanding is essential to: recognizing challenges to our national security interest; establishing security policy; when appropriate, formulating clear, relevant, and attainable military objectives and strategy; determining, planning, and conducting operations that will help attain US policy objectives; and identifying the adversary's strategic and operational [centers of gravity] COGs.²

This passage highlights key areas of information we must know to formulate an effective strategy to achieve U.S. policy objectives. These areas include culture, religions, sects, ethnicities, social norms, customs and traditions, languages, and the history of the adversary as well as neutrals and noncombatants in the operational environment. The Joint doctrine is wonderfully concise and to the point, yet its simplicity belies the enormous volume and complexity of data needed to fulfill this seemingly routine set of requirements. U.S. policy objectives touch every corner of the globe. There is no known figure for the number of cultures in the world; however, there are 192 recognized states in the United Nations.³ Considering that each state is likely to be formed of multiple

² Joint Publication 2-0, *Joint Intelligence* (Jun 2007), II-1.

³ Data obtained from the CIA World Fact Book, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2142.html>, access 20 Feb 2010.

distinct cultures, some perhaps shared with neighbors, it is easy to see that the number may run to several hundred if not well into the thousands. What components of culture are critical? Are some more important than others? How do we prioritize? More importantly, how will studying socio-cultural dynamics help us build more effective strategy?

In search of answers to these questions, we will start with a process for examining sociological factors. To place such analysis in context, two case studies will highlight effective and ineffective methods of integrating sociological intelligence and strategy. The first study will examine the ancient efforts of the Roman Republic. As the foundation of Western Civilization, Rome will illuminate the founding of Western principles of strategy and intelligence. The second case study will examine U.S. policy in Iraq from 1953 to the present to highlight traditional weaknesses in American intelligence analysis. Based upon these studies, the monograph will conclude with recommendations for strategists and intelligence professionals to improve the integration of sociological intelligence and strategy.

This study is a first step towards formalizing effective sociological analysis in strategy development. As such, it will not arrive at a singular, unifying theory that will revolutionize strategic thought as we know it. Its modest goals are to establish the inherent value of comprehending socio-cultural dynamics, explore the synergetic returns of a strategy based upon such factors, and lay a basic foundation for sociological analysis. If it does nothing more than highlight the rudimentary essential elements of information for such analyses I will consider it a success.

Chapter 1

Leveraging Sociological Intelligence in Modern Strategy

We are what we think.

All that we are arises with our thoughts.

With our thoughts we make the world.

Buddha

The crucial issue in order to make the other guy back down [is that] you must understand his politics, his soul. You can't photograph his soul... The U.S. Air Force needs a department of culture.

Dr. Edward N. Luttwak

While historical examples may demonstrate that sound sociological knowledge of an adversary is useful in achieving strategic success, they rarely inform the observer about how to leverage such information in a useful fashion. Strategic planning typically begins, and sadly often ends, with exclusive focus on the adversary society's decision-making leadership and fails to seek a wider understanding of the dynamics affecting how senior leaders reach decisions. In their landmark work, *Essence of Decision*, Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow examine decision-making paradigms. They challenged conventional wisdom, which implied leaders are coolly calculating "value-maximizers" as defined by standing economic principle – the prototypical "Rational

Actor.”¹ They posit that complicating factors may confound the expected rational solution for achieving strategic ends. This includes scenarios in which a leader must bring order out of internal discord, which is often unseen, misunderstood, or unappreciated by outside observers. In other words, these complicating issues are sociological and cultural factors that drive society and affect an adversary’s strategy and action.

Allison and Zelikow outline two alternatives to the rational actor model. In their Organizational Model, decisions depend on rigid, bureaucratic procedure. Value-maximizing approaches may be constrained by inflexible, standard operating procedure, or may be simply overlooked by a decision-making body too inculcated by a staid organizational culture to think outside of the box.² Their Governmental Politics model highlights the impact domestic politics may have on foreign-policy decisions. They assess that governments may pursue risky international policy over safer alternatives if such policy helps to consolidate power domestically and minimizes the influence of rivals at home.³ As Carnes Lord notes, “Domestic politics and the cultural and ideological imperatives that shape and motivate the decisions of leaders are frequently as important as external factors in determining their behavior, if not indeed more.”⁴ Saddam Hussein’s decisions to invade Iran, invade Kuwait, and stymie WMD inspectors may have seemed irrational to outside observers, but likely met domestic political needs invisible or indecipherable to the outside world. Assumptions of Saddam’s irrationality dismissed his political situation and psychology, in particular his need to save face and retain a firm grip on power.⁵

¹ Graham T. Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 1999), 18.

² Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, 145, 396.

³ Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, 257-258.

⁴ Carnes Lord, *The Modern Prince: What Leaders Need to Know Now* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 23.

⁵ Jerrold M. Post, "Tailored Deterrence: A Requirement in the Post-Cold War Era," (Draft manuscript, 2009), 12.

“Attributing ‘irrationality’ to an opponent when he acts at odds with [one’s] expectation of rational behavior is a questionable way of filling the vacuum of knowledge about his approach to rational behavior. What is needed and often very difficult to develop is a more differentiated understanding of the opponent’s values, ideology, culture, and mind-set.”⁶ Allison’s and Zelikow’s work is a ready reminder for strategists to question a common assumption that the adversary is a monolithic, unified actor. This is a beguiling assumption as it dangerously oversimplifies the strategic problem when striving to induce alternative behavior.⁷

If the adversary is not monolithic, it is imperative for the strategist to understand where the divisions lie, not just within the government hierarchy, but throughout the societies and cultures comprising the state, as these divisions may provide exploitable opportunities. It is tempting for the strategist to view the process of cultural mapping as a task to delegate to intelligence professionals exclusively, but he must resist this urge. Intelligence professionals are a conduit for many forms of sociological information; however, academic institutions produce the lion’s share of information in this area. So, too, do international corporations, non-governmental organizations, and relief agencies, which often have a relatively deep understanding of the states, cultures, and societies within which they operate. Intelligence professions do not have special access to such information that is not available directly to the strategist. Furthermore, there are critical relationships that must develop between the strategist and the true subject-matter experts.⁸ Intelligence professionals are invaluable in assisting research and

⁶ Barry R. Schneider and Jerrold M. Post, *Know Thy Enemy: Profiles of Adversary Leaders and Their Strategic Cultures*, 2nd ed. (Washington D.C.: USAF Counterproliferation Center, 2003), 296.

⁷ Schneider and Post, *Know Thy Enemy*, 296-297.

⁸ David A. Mineau, "Culture and Coercion: Embedding Political and Cultural Expertise at the Operational Level of War," (Master's thesis, School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, 2007), 3.

analysis as well as organizing and archiving information; however, they must not become bureaucratic intermediaries who isolate strategists from other experts in the field, including scholars, business professionals, NGOs, and a variety of other people and organizations with deep sociological and cultural understanding of various countries and their sub-actors.

Politics is the clash of human purposes and interests; to understand foreign political matters one must understand the dynamics of the foreign society in question.⁹ If a strategist must understand a target society in order to influence its leadership, the strategist must have a clear conception of what a society is. Simply defined, a society “is a population whose members are subject to the same political authority, occupy a common territory, have a common culture, and share a sense of identity.”¹⁰ A society’s social structure is comprised of smaller groupings of self-aligning individuals. Such a group is two or more individuals with a shared perception of membership based upon social category or other attribute; perception of a shared common fate, identity, or set of goals; and bound together by stable patterns of interaction.¹¹ Groups may coalesce around a number of identifying factors to include ethnic, religious, political, or economic identity. Individuals are likely to identify with multiple groups within a society; however, most people tend to prioritize these identities based upon how each one’s perceived status fits within the larger society. In studying such groups, it is critical to understand how the individual self-identifies, rather than relying on categorization by an outside observer.

⁹ Angelo Codevilla, *Informing Statecraft: Intelligence for a New Century* (New York: Free Press, 1992), 404.

¹⁰ Joint Publication (JP) 2-01.3, *Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment* (16 Jun 2009), IV-2.

¹¹ National Air and Space Intelligence Center, “Behavioral Influences Analysis an Overview,” slide 11.

Ethnicity is a common catalyst around which groups form. An ethnic group is an assembly of people that identify with one another based upon a common heritage, a heritage that may be real or merely perceived.¹² This heritage generally rests upon characteristics such as language, physical traits, or ancestry. Members of an ethnic group consciously identify as belonging to the group and are identifiable by other groups within the society. Ethnic groups may be further split into tribes and clans. There are no universally accepted definitions of ethnic groups, tribes, or clans. Academic literature is in conflict, and scholars do not agree on what, precisely, constitutes each group or if populations should be studied under such groupings. However, for the purposes of this text tribes are defined as social networks organized by kinship with common needs for physical and economic security.¹³ Clans are similar, though, smaller in nature and more firmly based upon familial ties

Sociological literature often conflates religion and ethnicity, describing religion as a form of common heritage around which an ethnic group may coalesce. From an academic perspective, this may be true and serve as a useful manner in which to study a population. However, for simplicity it may well serve to isolate religion into a separate category for analysis. For ethnic groups, shared traits or characteristics are the ties that bind. In religious groups, shared beliefs rather than physical characteristics are what hold the group together. There is a chicken and the egg problem here for both groups. Did commonalities drive individuals together initially, or did commonalities emerge due to groupings for other purposes such as physical or economic security? Understanding the history and origin of all social groups is useful; however, for the strategist, the most practical approach is to understand the current cohesive forces that hold a group together. Origins and

¹² Marcus Banks, *Ethnicity: Anthropological Constructions* (London: Routledge, 1996), 151.

¹³ Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (December 2006), 3-4.

history will come into play more extensively when assessing how well groups interrelate to form a wider society.

Along with ethnicity and religion, social groupings may coalesce around economic power or class; after all, “money is the mother’s milk of politics.”¹⁴ In many societies, urban and rural housing develop along economic strata. Over time, the wealthy, middle class, and poor form insular population pockets that may limit exposure to the other economic classes. Such arrangements may lead to differing belief systems within each class. Economic class delineation may transcend ethnicity and religion or they may spring from persecution or exploitation of a given ethnic or religious group. As economic power relates to living conditions and quality of life, powerful tensions between classes may exist. Such tensions are often greater in societies where groups believe it should be possible to move freely up and down the economic ladder only to find that exploitation at the hands of the wealthy had made upward mobility impossible. In contrast, some societies have developed a cultural sense of place, where economic power rests on factors beyond the individual’s control. In such societies, people in every grouping may tolerate these sharp divisions between economic classes willingly.

Like economic class, groups formed around political ideology may transcend ethnic, religious, or economic lines or may be a direct result of such divisions. While religious belief systems center on ethereal, spiritual matters, political belief systems focus on practical, earthly matters such as social equity and justice. Abuse sanctioned under the rule of law may inflame ideological and religious passions. Current literature, including Joint Publication (JP) 2-01.3, *Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment*, and Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, refer to economic or political groupings as organizations or institutions, but for practical purposes these

¹⁴ Codevilla, *Informing Statecraft*, 425.

distinctions have limited merit. Again, the critical factor is how individuals self-identify at the highest level. If an individual values his identity through a political group more so than his identify through an ethnic group, that core belief system is more likely to guide his opinions and actions.

Social groupings are not limited to the four categories described. We can further divide social groups by education, profession, or a myriad of other characteristics. When mapping a target society it is critical to gauge the relative influence of an identified group against the others within the target society. Large, populous groups merit study even if they wield little direct influence, since mass represents potential power if properly focused. Small groups may merit more attention than their mere numbers imply if that group controls considerable political or economic power. Determining how far to break down a society is a subjective decision that strategists and intelligence personnel must determine on a case-by-case basis. In general, a cut line should be established when a group's potential ability to influence the society as a whole is beyond reasonable expectations in the view of the strategist.

Once the strategist and intelligence specialist identify social groups, the true analytical work begins. What is it that holds a particular group together? Is it merely similarities in superficial physical traits or shared ceremonies? Such a simplistic explanation is unlikely to be correct. Ingrained beliefs and assumptions about life, death, and the world around us shape our perspective and determine how we think about observed events. As Laurel Lee once observed, "I know I'm not seeing things as they are. I'm seeing things as I am." Mark E. Koltko-Rivera has studied this sociological phenomenon extensively and found that, "human cognition and behavior are powerfully influenced by sets of beliefs and assumptions about life and reality. Applied to the individual level, this insight has implications for theories of personality, cognition, education, and intervention. Applied to the collective level, this insight

can provide a basis for psychological theories of culture and conflict, faith and coping, war and peace.”¹⁵

Scholars and analysts have developed many titles for this core set of assumptions and beliefs. Carl Gustav Jung described a “philosophy of life” and Abraham Maslow described a “world outlook.”¹⁶ The Air Forces’ Center for Behavioral Influences Analysis has largely based its work upon the Koltko-Rivera model of worldview. In his article, “The Psychology of Worldviews,” Koltko-Rivera conceptually defines worldview as follows:

A worldview is a way of describing the universe and life within it, both in terms of what is and what ought to be. A given worldview is a set of beliefs that includes limiting statements and assumptions regarding what exists and what does not (either in actuality, or in principle), what objects or experiences are good or bad, and what objectives, behaviors, and relationships are desirable or undesirable. A worldview defines what can be known or done in the world, and how it can be known or done. In addition to defining what goals can be sought in life, a worldview defines what goals should be pursued. Worldviews include assumptions that may be unproven, and even unprovable, but these assumptions are superordinate, in that they provide the epistemic and ontological foundations for other beliefs within a belief system.¹⁷

¹⁵ Mark E. Koltko-Rivera, “The Psychology of Worldviews,” *Review of General Psychology* 8, no. 1 (2004): 3.

¹⁶ Jung was a Swiss psychiatrist and a founder of analytical psychology. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, a popular psychometric instrument, was developed as an outgrowth of his theories. See C. G. Jung, *The Practice of Psychotherapy: Essays on the Psychology of the Transference and Other Subjects*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, 2nd ed., vol. 16, The Collected Works of C. G. Jung (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966). Maslow was an American psychologist renowned for the conceptualization of a “hierarchy of human needs.” See A. H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).

¹⁷ Koltko-Rivera, “The Psychology of Worldviews,” 4.

For each social group he or she examines, the strategist must understand the basic tenets of the group's worldview.

A worldview encompasses a subset of, but not all, values and beliefs commonly held within a group. Koltko-Rivera bases his worldview theory on three types of beliefs, as defined by Milton Rokeach in *The Nature of Human Values*. Rokeach divides beliefs into existential beliefs, evaluative beliefs, and prescriptive and proscriptive beliefs.¹⁸ Existential beliefs are those that are capable of being true or false, even if it is not possible to prove them true or false in the real world. God's existence is an existential belief, as is the opinion that Elvis Presley still lives. Evaluative beliefs are those where an individual or group judges that an object is either good or bad. The notions that all human beings are essentially good or that cats are vile creatures are examples of evaluative beliefs. Prescriptive or proscriptive beliefs judge the means, or ends, of an action to be either desirable or undesirable. Examples may include the view that freedom is an inalienable right of all humankind or that doctors are noble professionals. Prescriptive or proscriptive beliefs are alternatively referred to as values.

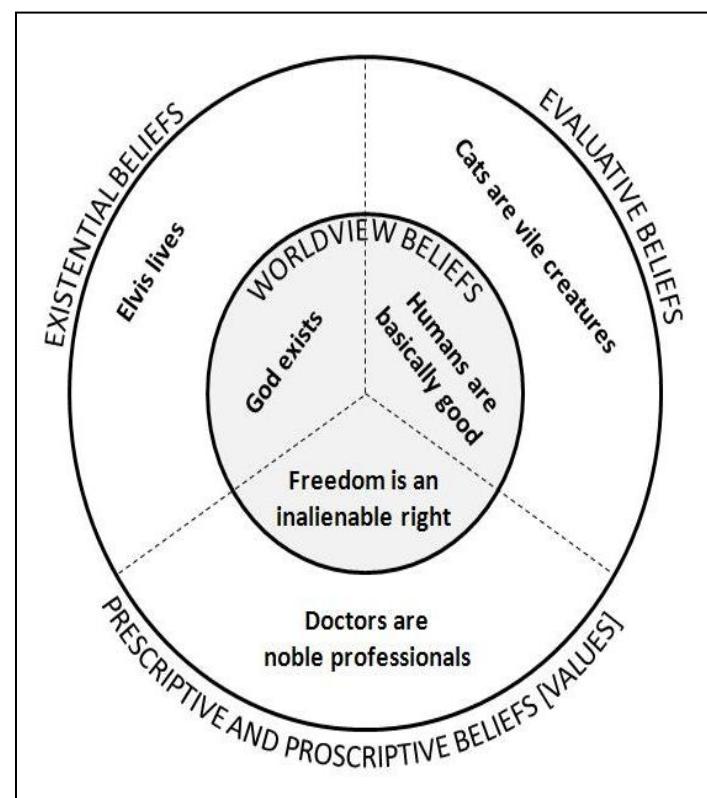


Figure 1. Relationship between Beliefs and Worldview

Source: Adapted from Koltko-Rivera, "The Psychology of Worldviews"

¹⁸ Milton Rokeach, *The Nature of Human Values* (New York: Free Press, 1973), 6-7.

Obviously, some of these examples are more central to social identity than are others, thus not all beliefs are worldview beliefs. Only beliefs that help define the overall fabric of reality, guide standards for acceptable behavior, define social relations, or delineate the existence or nonexistence of important entities are worldview beliefs.¹⁹ Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between beliefs and worldview. Where individuals of similar worldview also share a common language and history, we call the resulting collective a culture.²⁰ Beliefs that fall beyond the inner circle of worldview beliefs are still a part of the group's cultural fabric, but are not necessarily a requirement to fit in as a part of the social group. Inculcation of worldview beliefs happens at a very young age. Typically, acculturation to belief systems, values, norms, and cognitive processes transpires by an individual's teenage years.²¹ Cognitive biases and filters formed by this process usually go unnoticed by the individual without extensive introspective thought. Modification or rejection of existing worldview precepts is possible, though the process is usually difficult for the individual and surrounding members of the social group. Radical departure from basic tenets of the shared worldview may result in rejection and expulsion of the individual from the group at large.

In an attempt to integrate multiple theories of worldview, Koltko-Rivera compiled analysis from major authors on the topic and devised a "Collated Model of Worldview." He designed this collated model as an

¹⁹ Koltko-Rivera, "The Psychology of Worldviews," 5.

²⁰ Koltko-Rivera, "The Psychology of Worldviews," 41. Also see W. Lorenzo Baber and Michael T. Garret, "VISION: A Model of Culture for Counselors," *Counseling and Values* 41, no. 3 (April 1997). Larry E. Beutler and John Bergan, "Value Change in Counseling and Psychotherapy: A Search for Scientific Credibility," *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 38, no. 1 (Jan 1991). Sumie Okazaki and Stanley Sue, "Methodological Issues in Assessment Research with Ethnic Minorities," *Psychological Assessment* 7, no. 3 (Sep 1995).

²¹ Elizabeth Chamberlain, "Behavioral Influences Analysis Methodology Description Part I," Center for Behavioral Influences Analysis. <https://www.au.af.mil/bia/documents/methodology1.htm> (accessed 10 May 2010).

analytical tool to help understand individual psychology; however, it is equally useful in analyzing worldview belief systems within a social group and contrasting belief systems across groups. This approach is just one method of examining the socio-cultural beliefs and dynamics of a group or society, but it provides a straightforward analytical model for those new to the subject matter. The collated model identifies forty-two worldview dimensions. Each dimension describes a particular issue within the worldview belief system. The dimensions fall into seven groups: Human Nature, Will, Cognition, Behavior, Interpersonal, Truth, and World and Life. Each dimension includes multiple options, or positions, that an individual or group may take on the topic addressed by the specific dimension.²² Some options are mutually exclusive; others are not. Table 3-1 depicts Koltko-Rivera's complete Collated Model of Worldview. Shading indicates areas that may be of specific interest to strategists and intelligence analysts. These areas receive further attention below.²³

As the analyst and strategist approach the challenge of studying a social group or society, the collated model provides a basic sociological roadmap of issues to explore. As a first step, they should work their way through the list of dimensions and see if they can determine which options are applicable to the group in question. For the time being one must examine a specific group in isolation, do not confuse matters by choosing options in relation to other groups within the society. Once they make an initial assessment, the strategist and intelligence analyst must review the choices and critically question the basis of each selection. Did they choose the option due to an assumption, or is there hard data to support its selection? If hard data exists, does it draw from

²² Koltko-Rivera, "The Psychology of Worldviews," 28.

²³ For a complete explanation of the Collated Model of Worldview see Koltko-Rivera, "The Psychology of Worldviews," 27-46.

Table 1. A Collated Model of Worldview

Group	Dimension	Options
Human Nature	Moral Orientation ^a	Good Evil
	Mutability	Changeable Permanent
	Complexity	Complex Simple
Will	Agency	Volition Determinism
	Determining Factors ^a	Biological determinism Environmental determinism
	Intrapsychic ^a	Rational-conscious Irrational-unconscious
Cognition	Knowledge ^a	Authority Tradition Senses Rationality Science Intuition Divination Revelation Nullity
	Consciousness	Ego primacy Ego transcendence
Behavior	Time Orientation ^a	Past Present Future
	Activity ^a	Inward Outward
	Activity Satisfaction ^a	Movement Stasis
	Moral Source ^a	Human source Transcendent source
	Moral Standard	Absolute morality Relative morality
	Moral Relevance	Relevant Irrelevant
	Control Location ^a	Action Personality Luck Chance Fate Society Divinity
	Control Disposition	Positive Negative Neutral
	Action Efficacy ^a	Direct Thaumaturgic Impotent

Table 1. (continued)

Group	Dimension	Options
Interpersonal	Otherness	Tolerable Intolerable
	Relation to Authority	Linear Lateral
	Relation to Group	Individualism Collectivism
	Relation to Humanity	Superior Egalitarian Inferior
	Relation to Biosphere	Anthropocentrism Vivicentrism
	Sexuality ^a	Procreation Pleasure Relationship Sacral
	Connection	Dependent Independent Interdependent
	Interpersonal Justice	Just Unjust Random
	Sociopolitical Justice	Just Unjust Random
	Interaction	Competition Cooperation Disengagement
Truth	Correction	Rehabilitation Retribution
	Scope	Universal Relative
	Possession	Full Partial
World and Life	Availability	Exclusive Inclusive
	Ontology	Spiritualism Materialism
	Cosmos	Random Planful
	Unity	Many One
	Deity	Deism Theism Agnosticism Atheism

Table 1. (continued)

Group	Dimension	Options
	Nature-Consciousness	Nature conscious Nature nonconscious
	Humanity-Nature	Subjugation Harmony Mastery
	World Justice	Just Unjust Random
	Well-Being	Science-logic source Transcendent source
	Explanation	Formism Mechanism Organicism Contextualism
	Worth of Life	Optimism Resignation
	Purpose of Life ^a	Nihilism Survival Pleasure Belonging Recognition Power Achievement Self-actualization Self-transcendence

^a Options within dimension are not mutually exclusive.

Source: Koltko-Rivera, "The Psychology of Worldviews." Shading added by author.

a sufficiently wide sample set to reflect the group as a whole? Selections based upon assumptions or narrow samples must be annotated as such, and research or collection tasked to fill this void.

As one becomes more familiar with the group in question, it is important to recognize similarities and departures from one's own worldview belief system. Intelligence analysis and strategy development fundamentally require the ability to anticipate how a foreign group will react to various strategic initiatives. Failure to examine worldview similarities and differences in a systematic fashion may lead to mirror imaging. Mirror imaging is a cognitive trap where the analyst, unknowingly, projects his worldview onto that of the foreign group and merely determines how he would react if he were in the foreigner's

position rather than how the foreigner would react based upon his actual worldview.

In examining the collated model, several areas of strategic importance become self-evident. The Agency dimension of the Will group describes a group's belief in free will (Volition) or Determination where all behavior is determined through previous action or through elements beyond the group's control. Analysis of the Agency dimension will aid determination of a group's ability, or willingness, to alter its current action or policy. If a group falls into the Determination camp, trying to convince them to change policy under static conditions is unlikely to succeed. However, if the strategist understands the conditions by which one determined path or another is ordained, he may find success by altering the strategic environment to provide the applicable conditions to meet his desired end-state.

The Knowledge dimension outlines possible sources of information that the social group finds reliable. Most of the options are self-explanatory; however, a few seem to overlap. The Senses option merely indicates that knowledge gleaned through an individual's personal senses is accepted. Rationality refers to a notion of logic based upon casual observation, and on a belief that one's worldview corresponds to the world as it really is. Science refers to knowledge gleaned through systematic observation. The Nullity option indicates that there are no reliable sources. The strategic implications of this dimension are readily evident. To communicate information successfully to the targeted group, the information must be packaged and transmitted in a manner consistent with their acceptable sources of knowledge. Information received in a manner inconsistent with their worldview is likely to be rejected out of hand.

As the intelligence analyst and strategist both seek to anticipate foreign behavior, it should be evident that the Behavior group encompasses a number of vital dimensions. The Moral Source,

Standard, and Relevance are interrelated dimensions. The Moral Source refers to the source of guidance for moral matters. Options state whether moral guidelines are established by humankind or are established by a transcendent source. The Moral Standard indicates how yielding moral guidelines are within the group. They can be unyielding and absolute or they can be relative based upon timing or situation. Moral Relevance refers to the personal relevance an individual feels toward staying within the group's guidelines or willingness to deviate from them. Moral matters tend to reside at the very heart of the worldview belief system. As such, strategists are well advised to frame strategic initiatives to flow in line with the target group's worldview.

The Control Location dimension deals with the determinants of outcomes in one's life. Action indicates that deliberate personal action controls individual destiny in contrast to chance or fate. The Society option indicates that societal bias, favoritism, or prejudice is the primary determinant of outcome. While Control Location describes the factors that determine outcome, Control Disposition indicates whether the system works in a social group's favor or not. An understanding of Control Location and Disposition will aid in differentiating "in" groups and "out" groups. Action Efficacy ties in with the control dimensions as it describes the type of action required to change the existing situation. The Direct option implies that personal action can improve an individual's or group's situation. Thaumaturgic action relies upon magic or miracles to affect change. The Impotent option indicates that there simply is no way to take action to change the status quo.

The interpersonal group is also replete with dimensions critical to strategic analysis. The Otherness dimension measures tolerance towards social groups that differ from one's own, while Relation to Humanity indicates how one group prioritizes its rights among other groups. These dimensions hold tremendous potential for instability within a society, and for conflict between them. Notions of intolerance

paired with feelings of superiority inevitably lead to conflict between social groups as observed in the former Yugoslavia and throughout the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Relation to Authority describes a group's natural inclination toward leadership. A Linear system prefers a regimented, hierarchical system of defined leadership positions with clearly articulated responsibilities. A Lateral system prefers a more egalitarian model of group leadership. A thorough understanding of this dimension will help identify the movers and shakers within a group, not only the formal leaders, but potentially the informal support system upon which they rely.

The Relation to Group dimension depicts the priority of individual agendas against the group agenda. This is one area where Americans have significant difficulty understanding foreign cultural norms. America was founded upon the ideals of individual rights; as a result, America is one of the most individualistic societies in the world. Vast regions of the world have a diametrically different philosophy where individual needs, wants, and desires are secondary to the collective's needs, wants, and desires. This cultural gap leads many American analysts to misinterpret foreign motivations for various actions that simply do not square with American ideals.

Connection is a corollary of the Relation to Group dimension. It refers to beliefs about the degree of dependence an individual should show towards the social group. In dependant systems, individuals go out of their way to conform to group pressures and standards. In independent systems, there is little pressure to conform. In interdependent systems, individuals balance the tensions between group pressures and individual needs. Connection may be one indication of the strengths and weakness of group cohesion.

Justice dimensions reflect beliefs about the extent to which actions and outcomes are just, unjust, or random. Interpersonal Justice is

concerned with interactions in small groups and families. Sociopolitical Justice is concerned with the interactions within larger social groups, up to the national level. Though a part of the World and Life group, the World Justice dimension measures similar notions at a global level. These dimensions help explain a group's perception of being "in" or "out."

Correction examines the proper attitude members of a group should take towards individuals who have broken social standards. Correction is applicable within the confines of the social group, but also indicates how a social group may react to transgressions committed by outsiders. As such, the Correction dimension may provide insight towards how strenuously a group may respond to strategic initiatives they view as falling outside of acceptable social bounds.

The last set of dimensions we will examine is the Truth group. These dimensions depict the attitude a group takes regarding its overarching doctrine, mythos, philosophy, dogma, or orthodoxy. The Scope dimension measures the degree to which the group believes its truth is valid across a spectrum of situations or circumstances. The universal option within this larger dimension sees a group's "Truth" as immutable and valid in all circumstances. The Relative option signifies the position that the group's doctrine can vary in accuracy across the full range of circumstances. Possession reflects a group's belief that it owns Full understanding of the truth worth knowing, or merely Partial understanding of the full truth worth knowing. The Availability dimension describes the degree to which a valid way of life is the Exclusive purview of the social group. Alternatively, the group could hold an Inclusive stance, which recognizes that very different social groups may also have access to the truth.

The collated model is not an exhaustive list of all possible worldview dimensions, but it is an important analytical starting point based upon existing psychoanalytical thought as applied to a non-specific society. As an analyst applies this model to specific groups, new

dimensions of their beliefs, behaviors, and values are likely to become clear and others found to be irrelevant. The model is merely a framework to enable systematic analysis of a group and establish

benchmarks for comparing different groups within a society to one another.

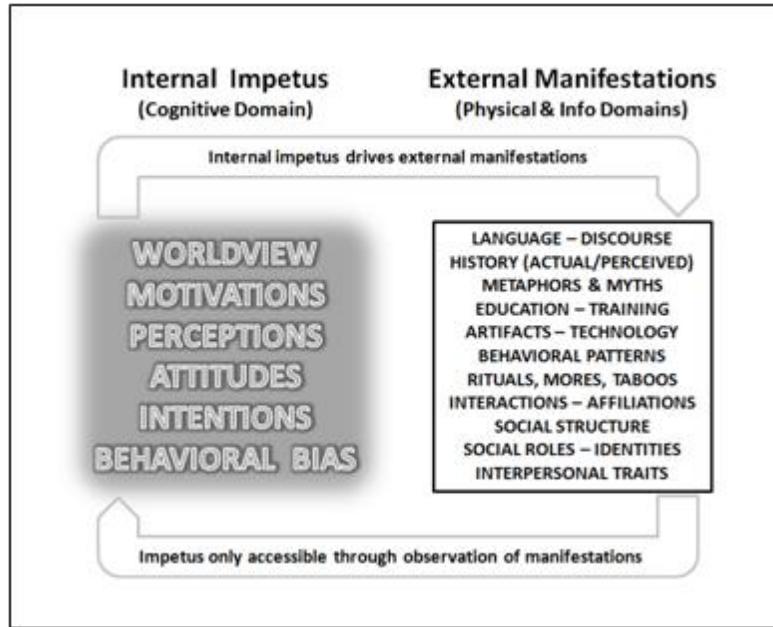


Figure 2. Relationship between Internal Impetus and External Manifestation

Source: Adapted from National Air and Space Intelligence Center, "Behavioral Influences Analysis an Overview"

Studying foreign worldviews is a difficult undertaking. Worldview is one component of a group's or individual's cognitive domain. Like perceptions, attitudes, intentions, and biases there is no direct physical representation of these cognitive constructs to examine. Rather these factors merge to form an internal impetus that drives observable action. Language, discourse, education, rituals, taboos, social roles, and interpersonal traits are some of the external manifestations that result from this process. Figure 2 provides a graphical representation of the relationship between internal impetus and external manifestations. While the elements of internal impetus are diffuse and difficult to define, the external manifestations are usually observable, recognizable, and much easier to characterize. Study of these external manifestations is often the only method possible to gain a clearer understanding of the underlying elements in the cognitive domain.

The utility of these theoretical and scholarly works becomes evident in the two following case studies, the first dealing with ancient Rome's employment of sociological intelligence, and the second doing the same thing for the United States in its dealings with Iraq from 1953 to the present.

Chapter 2

Roman Uses of Sociological Intelligence

In its two-and-a-half millennia history, Rome underwent drastic changes in its form of government and its foreign relations with the wider world. From humble beginnings as a farming hamlet with no strategy except survival, Rome grew into one of the most powerful and enduring empires in history. Two key events, the Second Punic War and Caesar's conquest of Gaul, will form the focal points for this chapter given the rapid advancements in strategy and intelligence that occurred during the course of those events. Because Rome ultimately became a foundational element of Western civilization, familiar concepts and issues will emerge in both strategic policy and intelligence methodology as we examine American experiences in Iraq later in this work.

It is important to note that records from the classical era are limited. Most surviving records take the form of narrative histories written by actual participants or their contemporaries. As such, modern standards of relatively dispassionate analysis are largely absent. That said, there are adequate resources available to glean a basic—and indeed a good—understanding of Rome's strategic objectives and intelligence processes. However, before we delve into those specific details a brief overview of Roman history is necessary to provide context.

The Roman Republic emerged in 509 BC following the overthrow of the existing monarchy dominated by the Etruscan civilization centered north of Rome (see figure 3). During the period of the Roman monarchy, Rome dominated the rest of the Latin tribes. When the monarchy fell, these tribes attempted to break free during the ensuing anarchy and regain their independence. This attempt failed and the rebellion was put down in 493 BC. The conflict ended with an agreement known as the *foedus Cassianum* (the Treaty of Cassius). The treaty provided for the

perpetual peace between Rome and the other Latin tribes. It deemed Rome and the thirty cities of the Latin League as equal partners. It further declared that Roman and Latin armies would join to provide for mutual defense against the other Italic tribes, and that neither would allow an enemy of the other party to pass through their territory.

Should a conflict come, all

spoils of war would be evenly split between Rome and the Latin League, and joint colonies would be formed in any conquered territory to support mutual prosperity. The *foedus Cassianum* would serve as the model of future treaties and indeed the core of Roman strategy throughout the republic and later the empire. This involved defeating enemies in battle, then, unless the enemy was either too dangerous or absolutely outside the Roman sociological and cultural orbit, welcome them as friends and allies, bound to Rome through military and economic interdependence.

The government of the republic coalesced around the existing Roman Senate. Under the monarch the senate was an advisory body to the King. The senate survived the fall of the monarchy, but it did not acquire the executive authorities of the king. Those powers devolved onto dual consuls who were popularly elected each year. The consuls



Figure 3. Linguistic Map of Italy, 6th Century BC

Source: Adapted from <http://www.evolpub.com/LCA/VTLmap.html>

alternated months leading governmental affairs, with each retaining veto power over his colleague. In addition to being head of government, the consuls were also the supreme commanders of the Roman military. As such, they personally led Roman legions and allied forces into battle. Over time the senate, whose members were appointed for life, grew in power by controlling financial affairs of state to include the funding of military forces. The senate aimed to guide foreign policy, however, the consuls still wielded enormous power and often disregarded the will of the senate. This was particularly true if the consul was beyond the walls of Rome at the head of an army. Following a successful term, a former consul would often be honored with a lucrative term as a provincial proconsul (governor). Cisalpine Gaul and Transalpine Gaul (see figure 4) would become highly coveted postings once those regions fell under Roman control in the last century of the republican era, but first Rome would have to conquer Italy.

During the early years of the Roman Republic, the Italian peninsula experienced constant warfare. Though Rome is often perceived as a belligerent culture bent on conquest¹, one must recognize that most of the italic tribes in the region were aggressive



Figure 4. Map of Gaul, 1st Century BC

Source: Author's Original Work

¹ See William V. Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome, 327-70 B.C.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979). Harris contends that Rome was an exceptionally militant society, economically based upon the spoils of annual warfare while her neighbors were inherently passive.

and expansionist in outlook.² The Roman Republic was unlikely to be more or less aggressive than the surrounding tribes. What set Rome apart from the other Italic tribes was its depth of manpower and strategic insight. In continuation of a strategy first outlined in the *foedus Cassianum*, Rome sought to co-opt the other powers in the peninsula rather than subjugate them completely. Total domination would require Roman forces to occupy every portion of the Italian peninsula, an impossible task for the burgeoning state. Instead, the Romans pursued a strategy of divide-and-conquer. Rome would intervene in third party conflicts, usually at the request of the weaker side.³ With that assistance, Rome added another ally to her growing ranks. Once the opposing side was defeated Rome would claim a small amount of territory for new colonies and take other spoils of war. However, Rome was more magnanimous in victory than other powers of the time. Rome would bind the defeated party into its alliance structure with a military requirement similar to that established with the Latin League. Defeated tribes were allowed to retain their own language, laws, and self rule in all areas other than foreign policy, but if they were attacked by a foreign power, Rome would respond.

Through this methodology Rome established a network of *socii* (allies) and by the middle of the 3rd century BC it had achieved control over the Italian Peninsula south of the Po river valley. The *socii* were bound to Rome, and each other, for common defense. Acts of war against one another swiftly drew Roman attention and retaliation. A system of conflict resolution and negotiation began to emerge. If elements within the *socii* could not peacefully resolve a conflict, Rome

² See Arthur M. Eckstein, *Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate War, and the Rise of Rome*, Hellenistic Culture and Society (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006). Eckstein examines the Italian peninsula from a Waltzian realist perspective where Rome was merely one competitor in an anarchic environment that lacked mechanisms for interstate dispute outside of armed conflict.

³ This was the case in the First and Second Samnite Wars as well as the Pyrrhic War.

would arbitrate. As the anarchic environment of the peninsula receded, trade flourished in Italy and beyond. Economic ties further strengthened the alliance. Though the *socii* were not full Roman citizens, the distinction was unnoticed outside of Italy. Foreigners referred to all of the Italic tribes as Roman. As trade flourished Roman coinage became the standard currency and Latin supplanted other native tongues to become the lingua franca on the peninsula.

This arrangement provided benefits to both Rome and each *socius*. Each *socius* remained autonomous in most respects, local leaders continued on much as before. Overall security was greatly enhanced and trade boomed. The cost for this security was light. Each *socius* was required to field a designated number of equipped troops if called upon by Rome. These troops would march to war alongside the legions, under the command of the Roman consuls. The *socii* had little sway over use of their forces. Concerns required a delegation to be sent before the senate in Rome. The senate would listen to the delegation's concerns, but it had little control over the consuls in the field until they were replaced for the next campaign season. Still, most *socii* found this a small price to pay for the security achieved.

Rome's particular gift for comprehending and exploiting sociological and cultural factors among the Italian tribes and ultimately beyond the Peninsula played a central role in these dramatic accomplishments. As will become evident, the Romans placed great emphasis on knowing their enemies. It is worth noting that the Latin word for stranger, *hostis*, is also the word for enemy—an indication of the ancient Roman cultural mindset and the Romans' visceral understanding of the importance of effective intelligence and focused strategy-making

For Rome, the arrangement with Allied and federated tribes had other, greater advantages. The consuls used the *socii* forces as *alae* (wings) to the legionnaires who usually formed the center of the Roman

battle formations. The ratio of *alae* to legion forces was usually 1:1, but in times of great crisis reached as high as 2:1, particularly when intelligence indicated the allied formations were trustworthy. These forces were locally manned, trained, and equipped lessening the overall demands upon Rome itself. Further, these forces remained under the control of local leaders unless called upon by Rome. They were useful in suppressing local uprisings without requiring the legions. This allowed Rome to focus on its periphery, while local leaders defended against local, low intensity threats. The division of labor under this arrangement also allowed regions to specialize their forces based upon their resources and local terrain. While the legions were primarily an infantry force, the *alae* often formed the bulk of the Roman light cavalry, and as the Greek coastal cities fell under Roman domination, they provided the basis for the Roman navy. To ensure these forces remained loyal, the Romans seeded new colonies among the *socii*. Roman colonists were often veterans of the legions, but gave up their citizenship while outside of Rome.⁴ As non-citizens, the colonists performed military service with the *alae* and could provide warning to Rome if loyalty started to falter—another aspect of Rome’s emphasis on intelligence.

As the span of Roman control grew, it began to brush against other regional powers. While expanding into the southern coastal area of Italy, the Romans triggered an invasion by Greek forces in support of the colonies of Magna Graecia. In the resulting Pyrrhic War, Rome eventually repulsed the invading Greek forces and exerted dominance over the Greek coastal colonies in Southern Italy. Expansion to the West then brought Rome into conflict with Carthage, a major state in North Africa descended from Phoenician colonists. From 264 to 241 BC Rome fought the First Punic War against Carthage for control of Sicily. Though

⁴ Tim Cornell, *The Beginnings of Rome : Italy and Rome from the Bronze Age to the Punic Wars (C. 1000-264 B.C.)*, Routledge History of the Ancient World (London: Routledge, 1995), 351-352.

Rome was victorious and expanded her dominance over the island, Carthage remained a rival power with a commanding presence in the Mediterranean and competing interests in Spain.

As Rome consolidated control over the remainder of the Italian peninsula, Carthaginian power grew in Spain, leading to the Second Punic War from 218-201 BC. Though suffering severe losses in the early stages of the conflict, the Romans regrouped and decisively defeated Carthage. In the course of the war Rome gained control over the northern Po River Valley in Italy, the eastern coast of Spain, North Africa, and Macedonia. Rome continued eastward, conquered the entire Hellenistic region, and expanded into the Near East. With these conquests, Rome followed the same pattern of co-opting fallen adversaries. This was true for all except Carthage. After the Second Punic War, the scars simply ran too deep. Rome imposed staggering war reparations on Carthage and remained wary of her activities. When Carthage finally began to recover decades later, Rome grew suspicious and launched the Third Punic war. There were to be no terms of surrender. Military-aged males were put to the sword and all others were sold into slavery. The Romans then razed the city, and Carthage disappeared forever as a threat. By the 1st Century BC, the Roman Republic became the dominant power in the Mediterranean Basin.

Throughout the Roman Republic the *Socii* system held admirably. The vast majority remained loyal to Roman through war and peace. Prior to the Second Punic War there was only one notable exception. Despite numerous defeats, the Samnites continued to resist Roman domination for over a century. During the Pyrrhic War they quickly rebelled, and joined Greek forces in fighting Rome. Fifty years later, when Carthage invaded Italy proper, the Samnites flocked to Hannibal's banner.⁵ They were not the only *socii* to fall prey to Hannibal's strategy. The Gaul and

⁵ Titus Livy, *The History of Rome*, ed. Ernest Rhys, trans. Canon Roberts, 6 vols. (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1905), XXII.61.

many of the southern Italic tribes also abandoned Rome. Hannibal also won over several of the Greek coastal cities, especially after the crushing victory at Cannae.⁶ Yet even in Rome's darkest hour, the majority of *socii* remained loyal, and none from Central Italy defected.

During the late Republic period there were still significant regional powers to the East, but only weak tribal peoples to the West. The Romans continued to expand their influence across Northern Africa, Spain, Gaul, and into Germany. During this period central authority from Rome was tenuous as the governmental bureaucracy was not designed to manage a civilization of this size. Rapid communication between the provinces and Rome was impossible, and a simple courier service did not develop for another century. As a result, the Senate and the consuls granted proconsuls extensive authority to manage their provinces, including command of legions and allied forces located in the region. These positions quickly became a route to amassing wealth and power as proconsuls undertook independent military operations of conquest, with or without Senate approval.

Political instability ensued prompting the Senate to attempt to reassert its authority over the provincial governors. These actions prompted Julius Caesar, at this time proconsul in Gaul, to lead his legion across the Rubicon River into Italy proper in disregard of Roman law, initiating a civil war in 49 BC. Caesar defeated his rival Pompey in 48 BC and established himself as dictator in perpetuity. After his assassination in 44 BC, Caesar posthumously adopted his great nephew Octavius through his will and thus gave him the majority of his estate and political influence. Octavius rose to power through Caesar's political allies and in 27 BC seized consular power and had himself reelection indefinitely. Though he retained the façade of the old Republic,

⁶ Livy, *The History of Rome*, XXII.61.

Octavius, granted the honorific title of Augustus, is generally credited as the first Emperor of Rome.

Under the new system of government, all power was centralized under the Emperor. This limited the power the proconsuls, many of whom were directly appointed, and could be removed, at the Emperor's whim. As the governors were no longer free to seek personal power and glory through conquest, Roman expansion slowed and the borders (*limes*⁷) became more clearly defined. Expansion into Germany halted after the Varius massacre in AD 9. Multiple attempts to annex southern Britain finally succeeded in AD 43, and from that point forward Roman borders remained fairly static until the contraction of the Empire in the third and fourth centuries. The greatly expanded size of the Empire posed familiar difficulties upon the Romans. There was far more territory than the legions could directly control.

The emperors thus turned to the tried and true methods of alliance building. A new system of client states and client tribes began to emerge along the periphery. Unlike earlier efforts to unite the Italian Peninsula during the republic, clearly articulated roles in mutual defense were not established with the client states. Rather, the Caesars traded economic favors in exchange for clients serving Roman interests, primarily by providing border security. In fact, by funneling money and influence through select chiefs, the Romans gained power over local leaders by enabling those leaders to increase the influence they held over their subjects.⁸ This enhanced the security of the frontier by establishing a buffer against more threatening barbarian groups beyond the borders. Rome found its interests best served by keeping the system in a steady equilibrium. Each client knew Rome could tip the scales in favor of a

⁷*Limes* (more specifically *Limes Romanus*) was a delimiting border system of Ancient Rome. The term is used by modern historians to describe the fortified frontier of the late Roman Empire. Hadrian's Wall in Britain is an example of a *limes*.

⁸ Edward Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire from the First Century A.D. To the Third* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 36.

rival, so each had incentive to remain in Rome's favor. In the West, along the German frontier the client system was dynamic and unstable. Clients in this region required constant monitoring and persistent reminders of Roman power. In the east the clients were more sophisticated and stable. Sufficiently aware of their relative power vis-à-vis Rome they required less overt signals to stay in line.⁹

As Roman suasion had its effect, largely through client perceptions of Roman power, the legions did not have to remain in static positions around the entire periphery. This left Rome able to respond to regional crises by moving limited forces from region to region as required without fearing collapse in any given area if their legion was temporarily elsewhere.

This delicate balancing act required excellent knowledge of each client and constant monitoring to detect changes in the strategic environment. Through the early Empire this system was more than adequate to protect the provinces. However, long-term the client system faced an unanticipated challenge. Initially, clients were very independent entities who were expected to maintain their own defense against small-scale raids by barbarians beyond the periphery. Occasional incursions were anticipated and acceptable. As the clients became increasingly dependent upon the empire, they became less capable of defending themselves without assistance. As these clients became more civilized, as local nobles were granted Roman citizenship, and trade between Rome and the client became increasingly intertwined, such incursions became unacceptable and greater demands were made to defend the frontier. The flexibility of the system declined and ultimately collapsed. Legions became increasingly tied to one locality. Evermore elaborate systems of fixed defenses were constructed. An overall hardening of the frontier required a larger military force that was less responsive to crises

⁹ Luttwak, *Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire*, 32-33.

elsewhere. By the late empire withdrawing a legion could quickly prompt rebellion and collapse of the frontier in that region.

Though the bounds of the empire grew increasingly fixed, the political arena teetered increasingly askew. Augustus constructed a tightly regimented government, but in upholding the façade of the old Republic he did not establish a clear line of succession. Typically, the standing Emperor would adopt his chosen successor before his death. This successor was usually accepted, at least initially. Proconsuls who could no longer attain power through external conquest began turning inward. Internecine conflict was rampant, political assassination was common, and few Emperors died of natural causes. By the late Empire of the third century few Emperors reigned longer than five years. By the end of the third century the Empire had fractured. The Eastern (Byzantine) Empire endured for another thousand years, but the Western Empire collapsed completely in the fifth century. Despite outstanding sociological and cultural intelligence, the Romans could not contend with the multitude of other problems that eventually undermined the Western Empire.

Core Roman Intelligence Methods

Whether ascending or declining, Rome devoted great care to gathering intelligence.¹⁰ Defined military intelligence units began to emerge in the early Republic and were utilized through the Imperial era. *Procursatores* were close-range scouting units. Mounted on horseback, these units acted as an advanced guard of light skirmishers to locate enemy personnel and harass enemy forces as required.¹¹ *Exploratores* were longer range scouting parties. Also mounted, these units operated

¹⁰ John Keegan, *Intelligence in War: Knowledge of the Enemy from Napoleon to Al-Qaeda*, 1st American ed. (New York: Knopf, 2003), 55.

¹¹ N. J. E. Austin and N. B. Rankov, *Exploratio: Military and Political Intelligence in the Roman World from the Second Punic War to the Battle of Adrianople* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995), 40-42.

much further afield than the *procursatores* and acted as pathfinders for the main force, leading them to or avoiding contact with the enemy as required.¹² *Exploratores* operated in smaller numbers than *procursatores* and typically did not engage in offensive action. They could also be fielded as an independent unit operating without a main force to monitor a designated area or patrol a section of the *limes*. *Exploratores* formed the heart of the Roman military intelligence system. Throughout the years they were utilized for a multitude of purposes. Development of *procursatores* and *exploratores* coincided with military reforms between sixth and fourth centuries BC. In this timeframe the Roman army began to move away from the traditional hoplite phalanx, developed by the Greeks, to the heavy infantry tradition of the Roman Legion.¹³ As Roman infantry tactics began to integrate tactical maneuver, greater intelligence was required to locate weak positions in the enemy force. *Procursatores* and *exploratores* filled this role.

When greater secrecy was required, Rome created a smaller, specialized group for reconnaissance. *Speculatores* became Rome's covert agents. Likely chosen from the ranks of the *exploratores*, these operatives worked undercover, individually or in pairs, in denied territory.¹⁴ Even though *speculatores* operated in greater secrecy, it appears that they focused primarily on collecting military intelligence by infiltrating enemy held territory, locating enemy forces, noting defensive positions, and then reporting back to the main force.¹⁵ Though there is no clear evidence that *speculatores* collected non-military intelligence, it is very likely that they occasionally played this role.

The final category of military intelligence unit developed later, at the beginning of the Imperial era. The *frumentarii* were created under

¹² Austin and Rankov, *Exploratio*, 42-54.

¹³ Rose Mary Sheldon, *Intelligence Activities in Ancient Rome: Trust in the Gods, but Verify* (New York: Frank Cass, 2005), 27.

¹⁴ Austin and Rankov, *Exploratio*, 54-60.

¹⁵ Austin and Rankov, *Exploratio*, 55.

Augustus to fill a courier role, to act as trusted agents to carry vital messages throughout the Empire. The *frumentarii* were selected from, and remained with, individual legions in the field, but they reported to a centralized parent unit in Rome. As such, these units developed a dual loyalty to the provincial governor and to the Emperor. The Emperors leveraged this loyalty and used the *frumentarii* to funnel information back to Rome independently of the ordinary chain of command. The *frumentarii* quickly became an internal intelligence service and by the middle of the 2nd Century were spying on the Emperor's internal enemies and friends. In this sense, they became Rome's strategic-level intelligence organization, collecting data on foreign as well as potential domestic foes.¹⁶

Deserters and captured prisoners also served as a prime source of intelligence in both the Republic and Empire.¹⁷ Both groups were likely to possess militarily useful intelligence, though the former group was more likely to provide accurate data willingly. Since deserters frequently departed due to troubles or disputes with their own people, they would typically give information freely in an effort to establish a rapport with their new allies. In addition to prisoners and deserters, civilian refugees would often flee the battle area. While refugees were less likely to possess intelligence on military plans or operations, they spoke the same language as the enemy, knew the terrain, and could provide valuable background intelligence on the people, customs, and politics of the region. Further, under the right conditions, the Romans could return refugees and deserters to enemy territory to gather more intelligence or guide *exploratores* or *speculatores* behind enemy lines.¹⁸ Many fortified cities fell to such methods. In general, the Romans would locate a

¹⁶ Austin and Rankov, *Exploratio*, 136.

¹⁷ Austin and Rankov, *Exploratio*, 73-74. Sheldon, Intelligence Activities in Ancient Rome, 19.

¹⁸ Austin and Rankov, *Exploratio*, 74.

disenchanted faction within a besieged town and persuade it to open the gates or otherwise betray its people.¹⁹ In 272 BC Milo handed over the town of Tarentum unguarded with a promise from the Roman consul Papirius Cursor that the townspeople would not be harmed. In 212 BC the Roman commander, Marcus Marcellus, bribed Sosistratus of Syracuse to reveal that city guards were less attentive during certain holidays when food and wine were liberally distributed. In sum, prisoners, deserters, and refugees provided a form of intelligence that Roman intelligence units could not collect through other means. Intelligence from these sources was not simply accepted at face value. Roman writings indicate that information was evaluated in terms of what the individual could reasonably know. Steps were also taken to confirm intelligence through multiple independent sources if it could not be confirmed directly through Roman collection assets.²⁰

These assets and techniques were prevalent throughout Rome's history. Several neighboring cultures used similar techniques. Oddly, the Greeks and Persians had developed more formal intelligence networks and far more advanced intelligence techniques, yet despite the proximity and interaction between cultures the Romans did not learn from their example.²¹ As their span of control increased, the Romans discovered greater challenges in the strategic environment. This fact calls for a closer examination of how Roman intelligence and strategy evolved through the Republic and Empire.

Intelligence and Strategy in the Roman Republic

As can be imagined, there is no record of an explicitly defined Roman grand strategy. In the early days of the Republic, it is unlikely that the initial Senate and Consul possessed more ambition than to

¹⁹ Sheldon, *Intelligence Activities in Ancient Rome*, 121-123.

²⁰ Austin and Rankov, *Exploratio*, 82.

²¹ Sheldon, *Intelligence Activities in Ancient Rome*, 4.

secure the city from neighboring tribes. In this period, the Roman Republic was constantly at war with the Etruscans, Samnites, and Gauls. A series of alliances developed with other Latin-speaking tribes in the central regions of the Italian peninsula for collective security. Gathering intelligence on the surrounding tribes was critical to discerning if a tribe would be friendly or hostile in a given situation. The Roman historian Livy relates that in the 4th Century BC the Roman consul sent his brother, disguised as an Etruscan peasant, into the Ciminian forest to win over the local Umbrians to the Roman cause. The brother was fluent in Etruscan and successfully penetrated the area where previous Roman agents had failed. The mission was a success and Rome was able to bring the Umbrians into an alliance.²²

Under more permissive circumstances, the Romans would send Senatorial Embassies to friends and foes alike. Under the cover of diplomacy the Romans would seize upon the opportunity to conduct reconnaissance. While the legates were in conference, the slaves were free to wander the area, interact with the locals, and take note of outposts, sentries, and defensive positions. Such reconnaissance was valuable but, like many aspects of Roman intelligence, it was a primitive, ad hoc system. Livy's histories give the distinct impression that the Romans had not considered establishing a systematic intelligence service to manage the collection and analysis process. They did not establish any permanent diplomatic ties with neighbors or allied tribes. This is a shocking revelation when one considers that the Romans relied almost exclusively on their allies to keep them informed of events that would endanger their common interests.²³ This dependence on allied intelligence left the Romans open to manipulation by their "friends," who

²² Sheldon, *Intelligence Activities in Ancient Rome*, 20-21.

²³ Francis Dvornik, *Origins of Intelligence Services: The Ancient Near East, Persia, Greece, Rome, Byzantium, the Arab Muslim Empires, the Mongol Empire, China, Muscovy* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1974), 52-54.

could advance their agenda by emphasizing or downplaying information to suit their needs. This weakness would plague the Romans throughout the Republic era.

In the early Republic, the Romans seem consciously to avoid establishing a formal intelligence service. Some historians relate that such an entity ran contrary to Roman custom and their republican ideals. Such a service smacked of deceit and treachery, the sort of thing to which only the Greeks and Persians would resort. This attitude is most likely false. The Romans found, as all great civilizations have, that the methods necessary to attain and maintain power are rarely pleasant ones.²⁴ The failure to establish a formal intelligence service is more likely attributable to the nature of the Republican form of government itself. Factions within the Senate utilized personal spies and agents to keep tabs on their rivals.²⁵ A centralized intelligence apparatus funded by the state and controlled by the Consul would be a check on their faction's power. As such, the various factions had reasonable cause to derail any efforts to create a centralized intelligence service. This is conjecture as there is no evidence as to why the Romans failed to model their intelligence capabilities after more successful examples in several neighboring civilizations. The Roman Republic overcame this neglect of an intelligence service with its diplomatic and military superiority.²⁶ This superiority was sufficient so long as the Romans only faced the disparate tribes of the Italian peninsula. As soon as they faced a great power, well versed in intelligence practices, the Romans found themselves at a distinct disadvantage.

²⁴ Sheldon, *Intelligence Activities in Ancient Rome*, 7.

²⁵ Sheldon, *Intelligence Activities in Ancient Rome*, 21.

²⁶ Dvornik, *Origins of Intelligence Services*, 52-54.

The Second Punic War

From 218 to 201 BC Rome found itself locked into a confrontation with Carthage which strained every possible resource at her disposal. This conflict provides many examples of the political and military advantage sociological intelligence can bestow. Unfortunately for the Romans, the Carthaginians claimed the early intelligence advantage as a result of the genius and superb guidance of the Carthaginian General Hannibal. It was not until the Roman Consul Scipio copied Hannibal's intelligence methods and tactics that Rome was able to cut Hannibal off from his distant logistical sources to turn the tide of the War.

Despite their loss in the First Punic War, the Carthaginians had developed a robust information service to gather intelligence and rapidly pass relevant information to their Senate in North Africa.²⁷ As Carthaginian forces withdrew from Sicily to the Iberian Peninsula this service extended onto mainland Europe. In 221 BC a twenty-five year-old Hannibal was placed in charge of all Carthaginian forces in Iberia. In two years Hannibal had consolidated control over all territory south of the Ebro River, which had been recognized by treaty as the dividing line between Roman and Carthaginian spheres of influence.²⁸ In the same treaty, both sides agreed that the city of Saguntum, 90 miles south of the Ebro River on the eastern coast of Spain, would remain independent. Though independent, Saguntum had closer ties with Rome and in 219 BC Hannibal created the flashpoint of the war by attacking the city. Saguntum appealed for Roman aid, but hoping war could be averted Rome refused to send forces directly, opting instead to send a diplomatic embassy to Carthage to impose terms for peaceful resolution to the crisis. However, the embassy was so poorly informed they naively demanded that Hannibal be turned over to them as a condition of

²⁷ Dvornik, *Origins of Intelligence Services*, 57-58.

²⁸ Sheldon, *Intelligence Activities in Ancient Rome*, 43.

peace.²⁹ By the time the declaration of war reached Hannibal, he was already in New Carthage (Cartagena) preparing his invasion plans.

Hannibal's agents deployed well beyond Carthaginian territory. Through spies in Rome Hannibal learned that his enemy planned a two-pronged attack against Carthage. The northern arm would sail to reinforce their ally Massila (Marseilles) and engage Hannibal from the north. The southern arm would sail to North Africa and attack Carthage directly. To foil that plan Hannibal launched one of the most audacious military campaigns in history. He planned to cross the Alps, in winter, to invade Italy from the North and draw Roman forces away from Carthage, back to the Italian Peninsula. In preparation for this campaign, Hannibal sent agents to the Gallic tribes on both sides of the Alps. Once again, superb intelligence placed Hannibal in an advantageous position. His agents were able to identify, and avoid, the tribes aligned with Rome, which were for the most part located along the coastline. The inland tribes were more wary of Roman influence. Tribes that openly resented this influence provided intelligence and logistical support in exchange for promises of liberation. Tribes with no ill will towards Rome could often be lured into alliance with Hannibal for promises of wealth and war booty. Hannibal used Rome's refusal, or inability, to aid Saguntum as a lever to bring more tribes into his camp. "Hannibal's advance information enabled him to use the most appropriate manner of persuasion with each tribe."³⁰ Rome eventually considered the same strategy to approach the Gallic tribes in Gaul, but their efforts were late. Roman overtures in Gaul were met with contempt and laughter.³¹

When Roman forces reached Gaul, their ally Massila informed them that Hannibal had already crossed the Pyrenees. The Romans were not alarmed by the information since they believed that hostile Gallic

²⁹ Sheldon, *Intelligence Activities in Ancient Rome*, 44.

³⁰ Sheldon, *Intelligence Activities in Ancient Rome*, 46-47.

³¹ Dvornik, *Origins of Intelligence Services*, 59-60.

tribes would slow his northern progress. Little did they know that those tribes were aiding Hannibal's advance and that his forces were only fifty miles from Massila. In a chance encounter, scouting parties from both sides stumbled across one another. Roman forces won the encounter and chased the survivors back to their camp. When the Roman scouts reported the size of Hannibal's force to Publius Scipio he assumed that Hannibal was poised to attack Massila. He gathered his forces and returned to Hannibal's encampment to find it deserted. Only then did Scipio realize the truth - Hannibal was already en route to Rome. Splitting his force, Scipio left his brother in command of the legions heading to Spain while he raced with the remainder back to northern Italy to catch Hannibal before his army could descend upon the peninsula.

News that Hannibal had crossed the Alps caused panic in Rome. The second consul was already in Sicily preparing for the invasion of North Africa. Hannibal's strategy to preempt Rome's invasion plans succeeded, and the forces in Sicily were redirected to northern Italy. Before they could arrive Hannibal routed Scipio's newly raised forces, wounding Scipio himself, at the battle of Ticinus. The victory on Italian soil prompted 2,000 Celtic allies, serving as auxiliaries with the Roman Army, to defect to Carthage. Such defections were part and parcel to Hannibal's wider strategy for operations on the Italian Peninsula, he aimed to isolate Rome from her allies. As Rose Mary Sheldon notes,

Most of Italy at this time was not yet Roman territory, but a conglomeration of independent, autonomous states joined under Roman primacy. Hannibal, devising his own brand of psychological warfare, strove to drive a wedge between Rome and the other indigenous communities of Italy. From his first appearance on Italian soil, he announced that he had come not to fight against the peoples of the peninsula, but to liberate them from Roman domination. After every battle he

released without ransom any non-Romans who had been taken prisoner, so that they would spread the word in their native regions about Hannibal's political goals and his generosity. Such gestures were instrumental in recruiting local troops and depriving Rome of potential allies.³²

When the consul Longus arrived with his forces from Sicily, Publius Scipio warned him of the Gallic betrayal. He urged caution, but Longus would not be dissuaded. With Gallic forces in both camps, Hannibal was able accurately to track Longus' movements. These agents reported that the consul was anxious to see the battle joined. Hannibal was happy to oblige. He chose favorable terrain and set a trap for Longus' army at the Trebbia river. His forces were annihilated. The victory paved the way for Hannibal into the lower Italian peninsula.³³

In the following campaign season, Rome elected the experienced General Gaius Flaminus to be one of the consuls. He was given explicit orders to stop Hannibal before he could inflict serious damage.³⁴ Once again Hannibal was well informed by his Gallic spies. He evaded Flaminus, humiliating the new consul, while razing the Tuscan countryside. Goaded into rash action, Flaminus fell for another trap. Hannibal used local scouts to identify key terrain. Leading Flaminus into a narrow defile on the north shore of Lake Trasimene, Hannibal slaughtered over 15,000 Romans and took a comparable number prisoner.³⁵ He now controlled all of Northern Italy.

The next Roman consul, Fabius Maximus, wisely chose a different strategy. He avoided contact and pitched battles. Instead, he curtailed

³² Sheldon, *Intelligence Activities in Ancient Rome*, 48.

³³ Sheldon, *Intelligence Activities in Ancient Rome*, 48.

³⁴ Barry S. Strauss and Josiah Ober, *The Anatomy of Error: Ancient Military Disasters and Their Lessons for Modern Strategists*, 1st ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 145.

³⁵ Livy, *The History of Rome*, 22.27.22.

Hannibal's movements and hindered his ability to provision his army.³⁶ The strategy dismayed the Roman legions. There was an enemy in their midst, and they wanted a decisive victory to drive him from the peninsula. Hannibal's spies reported this tension and Hannibal devised a scheme to amplify the discord. As he pillaged the region, he used his spies to identify property owned by Fabius. While he burned everything else to the ground, he left Fabius' property intact. Paired with the strategy to avoid direct battle, Fabius' credibility was destroyed. Hannibal's ability to leverage sociological intelligence in strategic and tactical planning was absolutely astounding.

In 216 BC, Hannibal achieved his greatest victory of the war. Unable to bring the Romans into another set-piece battle, Hannibal seized a large supply depot at Cannae. This cut Rome off from her southern supplies and forced a response. Fabius was replaced, and the new consuls were eager for battle. Once again, Hannibal was well-informed of Roman movements and the aggressive mentality of the consuls. To ensure victory the Romans raised their largest army yet, over 100,000 men.³⁷ Hannibal knew if he could crowd the Roman army, they would be unable to wield their numbers effectively. He formed his army with a prominent weak center of allied forces and placed his veteran troops into reinforced flanks. Hannibal used his superior cavalry to drive off the Roman horsemen, thus denying the Romans adequate intelligence on the Carthaginian deployment. As the Romans advanced on the weak center, Hannibal withdrew those forces, drawing the Romans into the deeper formation. He then signaled his veteran cavalry to flank the Romans, executing a perfect double envelopment. The

³⁶ Sheldon, *Intelligence Activities in Ancient Rome*, 50.

³⁷ Gregory Daly, *Cannae: The Experience of Battle in the Second Punic War* (London: Routledge, 2002), 32.

Roman forces were massacred. Only 14,000 escaped with their lives.³⁸ With the defeat at Cannae, the allies in southern Italy abandoned Rome.

Hannibal maximized the intelligence assets at his disposal, tactically and strategically. Ultimately, however, his strategy was flawed. Hannibal assumed he would be able strip Rome of her core Latin allies as easily as he had their northern and southern counterparts.³⁹ This assumption proved to be Hannibal's downfall. The Latins had been allied with Rome long enough to become acculturated, thus Hannibal was not able to drive a wedge between them. Further, Hannibal was dangling at the end of a long logistical train. He could subsist off the countryside, but if isolated from Spain and Africa he could not replace veteran troops, and his army's foraging alienated tribes that might otherwise have considered an alliance with the Carthaginians. While Rome tied Hannibal down in Italy, the Senate dispatched Cornelius Scipio, son of Publius Scipio and later dubbed Africanus, to Spain. Scipio emulated Hannibal's tactics and swiftly defeated the remaining Carthaginians in Spain.⁴⁰

With Spain brought under Roman control, Scipio marched on to North Africa. The threat to Carthage necessitated Hannibal's withdrawal from Italy. By the time Hannibal was able to redeploy his forces, Scipio was well prepared. For the first time the Romans utilized tactical intelligence in an effective manner and adequately tracked Hannibal's forces.⁴¹ Holding a stronger strategic position, with a superior army, Scipio was able to defeat Hannibal and end the war.

The Romans owed their victory to their superior logistical capability to manage troops and material. Defeat after defeat, Rome was always able to raise armies faster than Hannibal could destroy them.

³⁸ Livy, *The History of Rome*, 22.49.18. Polybius, *The Histories*, trans. W. R. Paton, 6 vols. (London: W. Heinemann, 1922), 3.117.

³⁹ Sheldon, *Intelligence Activities in Ancient Rome*, 53-54.

⁴⁰ Sheldon, *Intelligence Activities in Ancient Rome*, 55.

⁴¹ Sheldon, *Intelligence Activities in Ancient Rome*, 58-59.

Despite the obvious advantage in manpower, the Romans nonetheless came shockingly close to defeat. Hannibal's longevity as commander granted him superior experience in intelligence, tactics, and strategy. The Republican system of annual consuls placed Rome at a serious disadvantage.

Though Rome took note of Hannibal's successful approach to political, social, and military intelligence they were not able to apply these lessons to future capability in a consistent manner. Strategic effectiveness continued to be personality-dependant. Some leaders, like Cassius in Parthia, failed to take these lessons to heart. Others, like Julius Caesar, took full measure of Hannibal's methods and improved upon them. Caesar's brilliant conquest of Gaul established the foundation for Roman strategy for centuries to follow.

The Conquest of Gaul

Julius Caesar finished his consulship in Rome heavily in debt. Through a shrewd political alliance, he secured the governorship of two lucrative provinces, Cisalpine Gaul (northern Italy) and Illyricum (Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia). When the governor of Transalpine Gaul (Southern France) died unexpectedly, Caesar was awarded control of that province as well. Caesar spent his initial years in Gaul taking stock of the indigenous tribes. He accumulated a vast knowledge of tribal characteristics and their divisions.⁴² He studied their language, customs, political institutions, history, and economic situation.⁴³ Much of his early knowledge developed through his dealings with merchants and locals guides.⁴⁴ He later expanded his knowledge through the use of spies, *speculatores*, and allied Gallic tribes.

⁴² Keegan, *Intelligence in War*, 8-9.

⁴³ Sheldon, *Intelligence Activities in Ancient Rome*, 121-123.

⁴⁴ Keegan, *Intelligence in War*, 10.

Caesar began building his alliance network when the Helvetii attempted to migrate out of the Alps to better farmland in Gaul. Existing Gallic tribes already populated the region, but were no match for the superior Helvetii forces. The Gallic tribes appealed to Caesar for aid, and he was only too happy to comply. In his battles with the Helvetii, Caesar utilized tactical scouts, *exploratores*, to keep close track his adversary's movements.⁴⁵ In the course of the conflict, Caesar gleaned valuable intelligence from prisoners of war regarding enemy morale, tactics, and motivations.⁴⁶ In one case, prisoners revealed that the Helvetii womenfolk had divined that their forces could not win a battle before the new moon.⁴⁷ This intelligence explained why Helvetii forces had previously disengaged in the middle of a hard-fought battle. Caesar exploited this information to advance on Helvetti positions, knowing of their reluctance to fight under current conditions. In the future, Caesar would actively pursue intelligence on his adversaries' cultural mythos, exploiting them to his military advantage.⁴⁸

By using the Roman legions to force the Helvetii back to their ancestral homeland, Caesar began establishing a network of favored client tribes among the Gallic people. This expanded his intelligence network to the tribal people, who were better poised to collect information on their rival tribes. These tribes provided detailed sociological intelligence that Caesar could not gain through other means. He utilized this intelligence to his strategic advantage by exploiting divisions among his opponents.⁴⁹

As early as 57 BC Caesar had established a tier of tribal allies that guarded his northern frontier and kept him apprised of the activities of

⁴⁵ Julius Caesar, *Caesar's Commentaries*, trans. W.A. McDevitte and W.S. Bohn (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1869), 2.17-19.

⁴⁶ Austin and Rankov, *Exploratio*, 69.

⁴⁷ Caesar, *Caesar's Commentaries*, 50.

⁴⁸ Sheldon, *Intelligence Activities in Ancient Rome*, 124.

⁴⁹ Caesar, *Caesar's Commentaries*, 2.4-5.

aggressive tribes further afield.⁵⁰ While these allies used indigenous forces to repel small-scale incursions, Caesar supplied Roman troops against greater threats. Caesar realized that his fragile alliance required constant monitoring to follow the complexities of intra-Gallic politics.⁵¹ Over time, this alliance system began to pacify the region. If the Gallic tribes resorted to internecine warfare, they could not be sure which side the Romans would favor. Rather than risk total defeat, the tribes moderated their behavior. Negotiation between tribes slowly began to replace armed force. This nascent form of patronage would be used as the basis of the client state system Augustus employed in the early years of the Empire to expand and defend Rome's borders.⁵²

Caesar did not meet with universal success. At times, he suffered setbacks due to his impatience. In 55 and again in 54 BC, Caesar attempted to launch a campaign to establish a foothold in Britain. Both misadventures failed because he did not follow the successful intelligence model he used in Gaul to thoroughly scout new territory, engage with merchants and traders, and then develop mutually beneficial relationships with the indigenous tribes.⁵³ Regardless of these defeats, it is clear that Caesar vastly improved Rome's integration of intelligence and strategy development. By leveraging sociological intelligence, Caesar created a clever patron-client system and expanded Roman influence to the North Sea. His divide-and-conquer strategy served the Roman Republic and Empire for the next 500 years. Rome's success merits remembrance and careful study. As "low-tech" as they may have been, the Romans' methods, used 2,000 years ago, remain just as effective today. Modern strategists and intelligence professionals would be wise to remember these lessons as they face a renewed era of increasing

⁵⁰ Caesar, *Caesar's Commentaries*, 2.3.

⁵¹ Caesar, *Caesar's Commentaries*, 5.8.

⁵² Luttwak, *Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire*, 7-51.

⁵³ Sheldon, *Intelligence Activities in Ancient Rome*, 101-113.

ethnocentric tribalism, particularly in view of the unnecessarily difficult and often disastrous set of American experiences in dealing with Iraq.

Chapter 3

A Failure in Sociological Analysis: U.S. Relations with Iraq 1953 - 2007

Scholars and military professionals have written volumes about Iraq and the foibles of U.S. strategy in dealing with that state. Much of this work focuses on the decision to launch Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) in 2003 and the tragic results wrought by that conflict. This chapter will examine some of those elements, but uses Iraq as a wider backdrop to reflect on how the United States forms Grand Strategy and the inputs that sway its strategy development. This brief review will highlight the American tendency to concentrate on geopolitical tensions at the expense of examining local sociological issues and their implications for U.S. strategy and geopolitical goals. To understand how U.S. – Iraqi relations went astray it is important to understand how they began.

A Dubious Beginning

The United States had limited exposure to the Middle East until the early years of the Cold War. When Dwight Eisenhower became President in 1953, the region was not a high priority as the Korean War drew attention in the East and fear of Soviet provocations in Europe drew attention in the West. However, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles toured the region in the spring of 1953 and came away with a strong sense that a “Northern Tier” alliance along the Soviet’s southern flank would be required to check Soviet influence. The United States already enjoyed good relations with Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey, so one of the Secretary’s focus points for the trip was to evaluate Iraq’s stability and compunction to resist Soviet influence. Dulles returned from his trip impressed by the Kingdom of Iraq, noting that its leaders appeared more

concerned about the Soviet threat than did the rest of the Arab states.¹ Further, Iraq was deemed to be economically healthy as a result of its ample oil reserves.² As such, he concluded Iraq would be a useful ally in the region and pivotal to a Northern Tier alliance.³

Increased American interest coincided with greater diplomatic overtures from Baghdad. Iraq sought to professionalize its military and requested military aid from Britain and the United States. Though Britain declined, Dulles appeared amenable to the concept. His response implied that if Iraq joined a regional defense arrangement its chances of receiving aid would greatly improve.⁴ After lengthy negotiations, the United States and Iraq signed a formal Military Assistance Treaty in April 1954 and Dulles' vision of a Northern Tier alliance bloomed a year later in April 1955 when Pakistan, Iraq, Turkey, and Britain became founding members of the Baghdad Pact.⁵

Sadly, the Baghdad Pact never achieved the success of other Cold War-era organizations.⁶ The inclusion of Great Britain left the organization vulnerable to accusations that it was a tool of the colonial powers designed to aid in their continued subjugation of the region. Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser was a particularly vehement critic of the Pact.⁷ Fearful of the rising wave of Arab nationalism and the implicit dangers it signaled for Israel, the United States refused to join the alliance. The move was a severe disappointment to Britain. At Britain's repeated request, the United States did join the military

¹ Daniel C. Williamson, "Understandable Failure: The Eisenhower Administration's Strategic Goals in Iraq, 1953-1958," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 17, no. 3 (2006): 598.

² Gulshan Dietl, *The Dulles Era: America Enters West Asia*, 1st ed. (New Delhi: Lancer International, 1986), 46-49.

³ Steven Z. Freiberger, *Dawn over Suez : The Rise of American Power in the Middle East, 1953-1957* (Chicago: I.R. Dee, 1992), 51-53.

⁴ Williamson, "Understandable Failure," 598.

⁵ "Baghdad Pact," in *Encyclopedia of the Cold War*, ed. Ruud van Dijk, et al. (New York: Routledge, 2008).

⁶ "Baghdad Pact," 57.

⁷ Williamson, "Understandable Failure," 598.

committee of the Baghdad Pact in 1957 but continued to refuse full membership.⁸

Arab nationalism turned out to be a larger problem for the Pact than the United States had anticipated. The staunchly pro-Western Hashimite Monarchy, installed by the British in Iraq, steadily weakened in the face of the growing Pan-Arab movement. A military coup deposed the Monarchy in 1958, and the “Free Officer” movement, led by Abdul Karim Qasim seized power. Strongly resentful of Western imperialism, Qasim withdrew from the Baghdad Pact in March of 1959 and turned to the Soviet Union for economic and military assistance.⁹ With Iraq’s withdrawal the Baghdad Pact was renamed the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), but the group had little effect on the spread of Soviet regional influence. The Soviets merely bypassed its member states and established political ties with governments in Egypt, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, and Libya.

Eisenhower’s goal of making Iraq a stable member of a Western alliance, tied to a Northern Tier defensive arrangement, failed.¹⁰ From a global geopolitical perspective, the attempt to construct an alliance along the Soviets’ southern frontier made perfect sense. However, from a regional perspective the attempt was tremendously shortsighted, as it failed to account for the realities of Arab nationalism, anti-colonial sentiment, and the troubled history of Iraqi-British relations, which included outright war in 1941. One of the primary reasons the Monarchy sought military aid was to consolidate the regime’s domestic security; yet, such facts did not fit into Washington’s strategic calculus. Historians of the period have noted that the Eisenhower Administration

⁸ Salim Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East*, The New Cold War History (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 20.

⁹ Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 143-144.

¹⁰ Williamson, "Understandable Failure" 599.

repeatedly underestimated, or chose to ignore, local and regional sociological factors when determining the course of foreign policy.¹¹ The focus was entirely on the geopolitics of the Cold War tensions between East and West, even if local factors were likely to undermine the overarching strategic effort. This trend would continue to hamper U.S. policy for decades.

The Severing of Relations

The 1958 coup was merely the culmination of a long series of uprisings that began in the 1930s. By sweeping away the old order, Qasim revived long-suppressed sectarian, tribal, and ethnic conflicts – the strongest of which were those between Kurds and Arabs and between Sunni and Shia.¹² Though the 1958 coup was sparked by Pan-Arab sentiment, Qasim was not a member of the Northwestern Sunni tribes that most strongly favored Nasser's nationalist movement. His close ties with the Communist Party prompted an assassination attempt in October 1959 by a group of Ba'athists, which included a young Saddam Hussein.¹³ The plot failed, but Qasim struggled to balance the factions threatening to tear the new republic apart. In an effort to unify internal factions, Qasim embarked upon a disastrous course in foreign policy. He antagonized Iran with a series of territorial disputes over the Arabic-

¹¹ See Peter L. Hahn, *The United States, Great Britain, and Egypt, 1945-1956: Strategy and Diplomacy in the Early Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); Burton Ira Kaufman, *The Arab Middle East and the United States: Inter-Arab Rivalry and Superpower Diplomacy*, Twayne's International History Series (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996); George Lenczowski, *American Presidents and the Middle East* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990).

¹² Library of Congress Federal Research Division, *Iraq a Country Study*, ed. Helen Chapin Metz Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1988.

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/iqtoc.html>. (Accessed 1 May 2010)

¹³ William Roe Polk, *Understanding Iraq: The Whole Sweep of Iraqi History, from Genghis Khan's Mongols to the Ottoman Turks to the British Mandate to the American Occupation*, 1st ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 113, 164.

speaking Khuzistan region of Iran and the Shatt al-Arab waterway.¹⁴ In 1961, he renewed historical claims over the newly independent state of Kuwait. When the Arab League unanimously accepted Kuwait's membership, Qasim severed all diplomatic ties with Iraq's Arab neighbors.¹⁵

Matters worsened in August 1961 when the Kurds tired of waiting for their promised autonomy and revolted against the government in Baghdad. The military action to suppress the uprising drained Iraqi resources and further alienated the military officer corps. For the next few years, Qasim maintained power through deals and promises to the multitude of factions entrenched across Iraq. Inevitably, Qasim could not keep most of the deals and promises he made. His core support remained with the Communist Party, and he drifted further into their fold. Ultimately, a Ba'athist coup overthrew Qasim in February 1963. In the wake of OIF, new reports surfaced that the British government and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had instigated the coup; however, the majority of these reports trace back to the writings of Robert Morris, a former National Security Council staffer.¹⁶ The CIA denies supporting the Ba'athist coup, and nobody has verified Morris's claims through other sources.¹⁷

The 1960s were an incredibly tumultuous time for Iraq, with repeated coups and counter coups. Conflict with the Kurds continued, with minor breaks, throughout this period. In the wake of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War the United States severed diplomatic relations with Iraq. In 1968 a series of coups brought the Ba'ath Party under the control of

¹⁴ Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 2nd ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004), 164-180.

¹⁵ Federal Research Division, *Iraq a Country Study*.

¹⁶ Roger Morris, "A Tyrant 40 Years in the Making," *The New York Times* March 14, 2003.

¹⁷ David Morgan, "Ex-U.S. Official Says CIA Aided Baathists," *Reuters* April 20, 2003.

Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr. Under al-Bakr, the government stabilized, to a degree, but ethnic and religious tensions continued through the 1970s.

Once Qasim began moving Iraq into the Soviet sphere of influence, the United States turned toward Iran as its key regional ally and all but ignored Iraq. The CIA watched the rise of the Ba'ath Party with interest, but grossly mischaracterized the movement as a moderating force in the region.¹⁸ The explosive ethnic, religious, and political tensions precipitated a recurring cycle of violence in Iraq. This period provided many opportunities to study Iraqi social dynamics and movements, but American intelligence analysts, strategists, and policy makers missed them. The larger geopolitics of the Cold War overshadowed the entire effort.

The Enemy of My Enemy

By the late 1970s, the United States had long viewed Iran as its staunchest ally in the Middle East. The Shah had embarked upon a vast modernization program for Iran, influenced heavily by the West. A large part of that program entailed modernization of the Iranian military, which was equipped with the latest American hardware and weapons. The gilded façade of the Iranian regime, however, masked the rot and tumult that lay beneath. Social tensions and corruption in Iran were clear to the West, but dismissed as minor issues. They were certainly not perceived to be significantly threatening to the Shah's regime. The truth came crashing down in January 1979 when the Shah fled the country for exile. The royal regime collapsed entirely on February 11, when rebels overwhelmed the last remaining forces loyal to the Shah. By April, the nation voted by popular referendum to become an Islamic Republic and installed the Ayatollah Khomeini as its supreme leader. In

¹⁸ James Chrifield, PBS Interview.
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/saddam/interviews/critchfield.html>. (Accessed 25 May 2010).

November, matters worsened for the United States when Islamic students and militants occupied the embassy in Tehran, taking sixty-six hostages. The Islamic revolution in Iran radically altered the strategic equation in the region.

Iraq initially viewed the Iranian revolution in a positive light. After all, Khomeini's revolution removed the once-powerful Shah and his Western influences from the region. However, relations between the two nations deteriorated rapidly. Iranian clerics renewed claims on Bahrain and urged Shia communities in Arab states to rise up against their governments.¹⁹ Demonstrations quickly followed in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Kuwait. Iraq cracked down on its Shia population, immediately arresting and executing leaders planning demonstrations in Najaf.²⁰ While Iraq faced a new challenge her new leader, Saddam Hussein, who deposed al-Bakr in July 1979, also saw an opportunity.

The Shah's military might enabled him to strong-arm many of Iran's neighbors into settling territorial disputes in Iran's favor. Iraq still resented the 1975 Algiers Agreement by which Iraq gave up its claim to the entire Shatt al-Arab in exchange for Iranian assurances to cease support to the Kurdish insurgency in Northern Iraq.²¹ The military machine the Shah had built was now in disarray, as loyalists fled or were purged from the ranks. Further, the Iranians had clearly terminated their association with America. Iran stood alone, weaker than it had been in decades. On September 22, 1980, Iraq launched a full-scale air attack against airfields in Iran with the express purpose of destroying the Iranian Air Force on the ground. The attack failed to achieve this

¹⁹ Claudia Wright, "Implications of the Iraq-Iran War," *Foreign Affairs* 59, no. 2 (1980): 277.

²⁰ Wright, "Implications of the Iraq-Iran War," 277.

²¹ Wright, "Implications of the Iraq-Iran War," 277.

objective, but the next day Iraq began a ground invasion to seize the Shatt al-Arab and Khuzestan in southwestern Iran.²²

Officially, the United States remained neutral during the Iran-Iraq War; however, Washington likely cheered news of the invasion. There are some indications that the Carter administration made contact with Saddam in 1979 to discuss the Iranian Revolution. Some writers go so far as to say that Carter gave Saddam the green light to attack, while others indicate that select, possibly manipulated, intelligence was passed to Saddam to encourage him to attack without the United States actually sanctioning any action.²³ American reticence toward Iraq diminished in the following years. By 1982, the momentum of the war shifted to Iranian favor and Iraq began losing previous gains. The Reagan administration began backing Iraq in a more open manner. The administration removed Iraq from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism to aid technology transfer, which in many cases involved dual-use technology.²⁴ The U.S. also provided intelligence support, including imagery revealing Iranian tactical positions.²⁵ By 1984, the United States restored normal relations with Iraq.

The war ground on for eight long years and ended with no appreciable gains for either side. It saw repeated use of chemical weapons. Each side accused the other of chemical weapons employment, but most evidence points primarily to use by Iraq against Iranian forces as well as Kurdish guerrilla fighters and civilians – a charge Saddam would refuse to deny in his later war crimes trial. U.S. support to the despotic regime was clearly motivated by a desire to check

²² Efraim Karsh, *The Iran-Iraq War, 1980-1988*, Essential Histories (Oxford: Osprey Publishers, 2002), 22-29.

²³ Barry Lando, *Web of Deceit: The History of Western Complicity in Iraq, from Churchill to Kennedy to George W. Bush* (New York: Other Press, 2007), 51-55.

²⁴ Alan Friedman, *Spider's Web: The Secret History of How the White House Illegally Armed Iraq* (New York: Bantam Books, 1993), 7-10.

²⁵ Friedman, *Spider's Web*, 24, 38.

the Iranian Revolution in some fashion. Once again, large geopolitical concerns overshadowed any reservation over what was happening domestically within Iraq. Suppression of Kurdish and Shia groups continued throughout the war. Saddam amassed staggering debt, while suffering significant losses in manpower and hardware. He likely perceived that the failure to achieve his war objectives hurt his credibility and standing in the Arab world, but it certainly did not diminish his desire for greater glory. Failure to comprehend Saddam's political and psychological viewpoint would come back to haunt the United States

The Invasion of Kuwait and Operation DESERT STORM

Kuwait had heavily funded Iraq's war with Iran, and by the end of the war, Iraqi debt to Kuwait alone stood at \$14 billion. Total debts towered at \$40 billion.²⁶ Iraq pressed Kuwait to forgive the debt, but Kuwait refused. Iraq also encouraged the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to mandate a reduction in oil output in an effort to raise oil prices, thus helping Iraq repay its debts. OPEC was amenable, but Iraq accused Kuwait of overproduction that continued to suppress oil prices. Iraq labeled Kuwait's action as "economic warfare." Matters worsened when Iraq further claimed that Kuwait had begun slant-drilling over the border into Iraq's portion of Rumaila oil field.

In July 1991, Iraq began massing troops on the Kuwaiti border. The situation prompted the infamous July 25 meeting between Saddam Hussein and the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie. She has been accused of signaling consent, or at least ambivalence, through her statement that, "we have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your

²⁶ "Confrontation in the Gulf; Excerpts from Iraqi Document on Meeting with U.S. Envoy," *The New York Times* September 23, 1990. <http://www.nytimes.com/1990/09/23/world/confrontation-in-the-gulf-excerpts-from-iraqi-document-on-meeting-with-us-envoy.html>. (Accessed 11 May 2010).

border disagreement with Kuwait.”²⁷ However, examination of the full transcript makes it clear that the Ambassador was challenging the purpose of the Iraqi forces near the southern border. The language was not as strong as it could have been, but no one on the U.S. side realistically believed that Iraq would stage a full-scale invasion of Kuwait. At the time, the worst expectation was of a border skirmish over the Rumaila oil field. Once again, the United States failed to understand the intricacies of Iraqi political intentions; however, this time, America was compelled to act. Despite years of on again, off again relations with Iraq, the United States did not have an adequate understanding of Saddam or the Iraqi mindset. Under such circumstances, coercion was going to be a difficult proposition.

When Iraq stormed across the Kuwaiti border there was reasonable fear that the Iraqis would not stop with Kuwait, but rather continue their advance into Saudi Arabia and seize the Kingdom’s oil wealth. Initial war plans emphasized the defense of Saudi Arabia using air power to blunt an Iraqi incursion until enough ground forces arrived in theater to stage a classic combined arms counter attack to drive the Iraqis out of Kuwait.²⁸ In this plan, ground power would play the dominant role while air power would support the ground scheme of maneuver. Simultaneously, a second planning effort was underway in the Pentagon for a different kind of air campaign. Led by Col John Warden, this effort envisioned an air campaign shaped in the strategic air power tradition. Instead of targeting Iraqi ground forces in Kuwait, this plan focused on the Saddam Regime in an effort to coerce him to withdraw his forces from Kuwait. The plan, dubbed Instant Thunder, featured three primary objectives: raise to an unacceptable level the cost to Iraq of remaining in

²⁷ "Confrontation in the Gulf; Excerpts from Iraqi Document on Meeting with U.S. Envoy."

²⁸ Edward C. Mann, *Thunder and Lightning: Desert Storm and the Airpower Debates* (Maxwell Air Force Base: Air University Press, 1995), 60.

Kuwait, isolate forces in Kuwait from an incapacitated government, and disarm Saddam's regime.

Rather than using brute force to dislodge the Iraqi forces from Kuwait, Instant Thunder would demonstrate Iraqi vulnerability to air attack. With no hope of countering American air power, Saddam would realize that the drawbacks of remaining in Kuwait far outweighed the benefits of trying to stay. Though not central to the plan, Warden and his planning team believed that the air campaign would weaken the Iraqi regime so severely that the government might topple as a result of internal collapse, rebellion, or both.²⁹

Warden and the Instant Thunder planners briefed the concept to Central Air Forces (CENTAF) commander Lt Gen Charles "Chuck" Horner on 15 August 1990. Gen Horner was irritated that a parallel planning effort had occurred outside of his staff. Reluctantly, Gen Horner agreed to incorporate portions of Instant Thunder into his larger air campaign.

At its heart, Instant Thunder was a coercive plan to shape Saddam's decision-making calculus. Warden believed that wars were fought to convince the enemy leadership to accept political demands.³⁰ Instant Thunder was designed to achieve that exact effect. The plan was built upon Warden's five-ring analytical model. This was a methodology to study and plan attacks against complex enemy leadership systems. The model depicted five concentric rings. Each represented an enemy center of gravity that supported the ring it surrounded. Leadership occupied the innermost ring followed by organic essentials, infrastructure, population, and finally fielded forces. To optimize the attack, one aimed to strike as many of the rings as possible,

²⁹ Mann, *Thunder and Lightning*, 35.

³⁰ Col John A. Warden, "Employing Air Power in the Twenty-First Century," in *The Future of Air Power in the Aftermath of the Gulf War*, ed. Richard H. Shultz Jr. and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff Jr. (Maxwell AFB: Air University Press, 1992), 62.

simultaneously. The objective was to induce strategic paralysis by crippling the enemy leadership.³¹

Warden firmly believed that the military-strategic application of air power could achieve strategic paralysis without the need for ground forces, but Gen Horner disagreed. He liked elements of the plan, but was determined not to draw too much air power away from the vital effort to target the forces fielded in Kuwait, which, ironically, Warden viewed as a tactical exercise and thus made his lowest priority in Instant Thunder. The air campaign executed in Operation DESERT STORM was a hybrid of the two concepts.

Warden's idea for analyzing enemy leadership in order to tailor a coercion effort was noble in concept. Unfortunately, his specific approach was flawed. Warden acknowledged the limitation in his post-Desert Storm writings: "The underlying assumption of this analytic approach is that all organizations are put together in about the same way."³² This assumption leads strategists away from adversary-specific analysis. When one drifts away from such specificity, it becomes very easy to slip into a mirror-imaging trap where the analyst projects information about his own organization onto the enemy in order to fill information gaps. By his own admission, Warden fell into this trap.

The Instant Thunder team work tirelessly to locate applicable sociological intelligence on the Iraqi Regime, but they met with limited success. At this time few organizations were geared to conduct these type of studies. Organizational friction between the Instant Thunder team and the CENTAF staff further hindered the effort to locate appropriate intelligence to support the coercion component of the air campaign. Sadly, Dr. Jarrold Post, former head of the CIA's Center for

³¹ Col John A. III Warden, "The Enemy as a System," *Airpower Journal* 9, no. 1 (Spring 1995).

³² John A. Warden, *The Air Campaign: Planning for Combat*, Rev. ed. (San Jose: toExcel, 1998).

the Analysis of Personality and Political Behavior, had produced a psychological profile of Saddam Hussein in August 1990. He briefed his findings before the House Armed Services Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee in December 1990.³³ The report circulated in Washington in September, but never found its way to the Instant Thunder team. This situation demonstrates the importance of instituting a formal process to manage sociological intelligence in the same manner that the intelligence community handles imagery or signals intelligence.

Ultimately, the air portion of Operation DESERT STORM was very successful, but much of its success rested in direct attack against fielded forces rather than those geared towards coercion. In a surprising turn of events, the attacks against forces in Iraq had a strong, yet unanticipated, psychological effect of their own. The constant aerial bombardment prompted thousands of Iraqi soldiers—mostly Shia with little or no loyalty to Saddam’s Sunni-dominated regime—to surrender. Considering the Iraqi army had experienced eight years of warfare with the Iranians, no one expected this massive collapse of Iraqi morale. Still, this situation proves that coercion is possible. The key is to understand the sociological dynamics with a society, where the friction points lie, and how to bring pressure to bear against them.

Sanctions and No-Fly Zones

As part of the cease-fire agreement, Iraq faced crippling economic sanctions. These were in place to ensure that Saddam could not rearm and threaten his neighbors again. Unfortunately, the Intelligence Community did not adequately assess the full ramifications of the sanction regime. The sanction did indeed hamper Saddam’s ability to rearm, but they also impacted the general population more severely than

³³ Jerrold M. Post and Alexander L. George, *Leaders and Their Followers in a Dangerous World: The Psychology of Political Behavior*, Psychoanalysis and Social Theory (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 210.

they did the regime itself. Throughout the sanction period, Iraqi life expectancy dropped and infant mortality rates climbed due to inadequate healthcare.³⁴ The United Nations instituted an Oil-for-Food program so that Iraq could leverage some of its oil wealth to care for its citizenry, but caring for the overall population was not Saddam's chief concern. He gamed the sanction regime while using its deleterious effects as a propaganda tool.

To make matters worse, the Iraqi regime cracked down on Shia populations in the south and Kurdish populations in the north, using the Republican guard and attack helicopters to suppress uprisings in both regions. In response, the United States and Great Britain established no fly zones over the affected areas to dissuade further attacks. For the next decade, the Coalition and Iraq exchanged hostile fire occurred in the No Fly Zones on a regular basis. Inevitably, the periodic bombing occasionally resulted in collateral damage to civilians in the region. Saddam leveraged this as a propaganda victory as well.

In the final analysis, the sanction regime succeeded in containing Saddam and preventing him from launching attacks against his neighbors. However, the effort failed to weaken the regime. Saddam's skillful use of propaganda generated sympathy for the Iraqi people and for Saddam's government, even in the West. Between 1997 and 2002, the GAO estimates that Saddam was able to cheat the sanctions regime and pocket over \$20 billion while his population suffered under the crippling sanctions.³⁵ This period illustrates that sociological analysis is vital to grand strategy. Sanctions designed to weaken the Saddam regime had the reverse effect and hurt the West's credibility. These

³⁴ Matt Welch, "The Politics of Dead Children," *Reason* Mar 2002.

³⁵ Joseph A. Christoff and Davi M. D'Agostino, "Recovering Iraq's Assets: Preliminary Observations on U.S. Efforts and Challenges," Testimony Before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Financial Services, House of Representatives. Washington DC: United States General Accounting Office, March 18, 2004.

factors, themselves born of an inability to make sense of the complex sociological and cultural conditions inside Iraq, set the stage for the tragic events of the next gulf conflict.

Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and the Iraqi Insurgency

In 2000, George W. Bush campaigned on a platform of reduced international commitments, and an end to America's role in peacekeeping campaigns around the world. He won election in one of the closest presidential elections in American history, and suffered credibility issues as a result. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 radically altered the course of his presidency. Bush waged an aggressive Global War on Terrorism, targeting the al-Qaeda network that launched the attacks, as well as governments aiding their cause. In October 2001, the United States launched a military campaign to destroy the al-Qaeda organization based in Afghanistan and topple the despotic Taliban regime that ran the country. The War in Afghanistan progressed well through a combination of U.S. air power and indigenous guerrilla fighters supported by U.S. Special Forces. Within months, the Taliban collapsed, and al-Qaeda went into hiding in the mountain region along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

With the Afghanistan conflict, assessed (erroneously) to be complete and victorious, the Bush administration began a closer examination of other potential threats in the international environment. The administration quickly zeroed in on Iraq as the Saddam regime had failed to comply fully with the inspection regime outlined by the cease-fire agreement. Saddam had given financial support to Palestinian terrorist organizations, and there were widespread fears that he was still pursuing a weapons-of-mass-destruction (WMD) capability. Bush announced that America could not wait to respond until after a terrorist attack had occurred when the result might be a mushroom cloud over an American city. He proposed a new doctrine for preemptive military

action and ordered his military chiefs to plan a campaign that would topple the Saddam Regime for good.

The Department of Defense, under the guidance of Donald Rumsfeld, had been busy transforming the U.S. military into a lighter and leaner force enhanced by information technologies. Rumsfeld believed the Powell Doctrine mandating the use of overwhelming military force based upon sheer numbers to be an antiquated concept. The force-multiplying effects of new technology would enable a smaller more nimble force to be equally as effective. Though some question the validity of Rumsfeld's approach, OIF was planned using a minimal ground force.³⁶

Once again, U.S. policy developed with little regard for underlying sociological factors in Iraq. The war plan sought to neutralize the Iraqi army and topple the regime, but planners gave virtually no thought to the stabilization and recovery efforts that would be necessary after the conflict.³⁷ The plan anticipated the use of indigenous Iraqi police and military forces to maintain order, but this portion of the plan was not well defined.

The combat phase of OIF proceeded well. U.S. Forces performed superbly and smashed organized resistance in short order. Saddam went to ground, and the regime collapsed entirely. However, matters took a turn for the worse as Ambassador Bremer assumed control of reconstruction efforts. With little thought to the sociological ramifications of his actions, Bremer dismissed the Iraqi armed forces and embarked upon a de-Ba'athification campaign to wipe away the last remnant of Saddam's influence. Unfortunately, the de-Ba'athification efforts removed Iraqi bureaucrats needed to keep Iraq running along with

³⁶ Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq*, 1st ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), 109-115.

³⁷ Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (London: Allen Lane, 2006), 110.

the political and military leadership. At the level of ethnicities, clans, villages, and individual households, this turned many Iraqis who had initially welcomed the invasion firmly against the Americans, who they now came to view as cruel and unjust occupiers. Bremer's actions thus set Iraq into downward spiral of unimaginable chaos.

The small Coalition force that successfully defeated the Iraqi army was completely inadequate to secure a country the size of Iraq. As the security situation worsened, armed ethnocentric militias sprang up and began seizing power in localized areas. Al-Qaeda took advantage of the poor security environment to wage an aggressive campaign against the United States and its Coalition allies. When al-Qaeda in Iraq realized its efforts against the Coalition were having limited effect, its leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi shrewdly assessed the explosive sociological tensions in Iraq and pursued a new strategy to ignite a firestorm of ethnocentric violence that would trap Coalition forces in the middle of a full-blown Iraqi civil war. His plan achieved great success in the wake of a bombing effort that destroyed the Shia Golden Mosque and several other targets in 2006. Ethnic militias clashed with each other and against Coalition forces. Violence spiked to all-time highs while support to sustain the war effort fell to all-time lows in the United States and other Coalition countries.

The Coalition effort in Iraq was salvaged by an ambitious counterinsurgency plan engineered by Gen David Petraeus. Rather than retreat from the region, the United States surged additional forces into it with a single-minded focus on protecting the population from the increasing levels of violence and, over time, turning it against al-Qaeda and other extremist groups such as al-Sadr's Shia militia groups. For the first time, U.S. strategy sought to incorporate the sociologic dynamics at play in Iraq and create a political solution based upon cultural conditions on the ground. These efforts profited further from a new initiative to embed cultural anthropologists with Coalition ground forces

better to understand the formal and informal power structures resident within the Iraqi tribal system. This initiative, known as the Human Terrain System (HTS), analyzed the human landscape in much the same way military forces study the physical landscape to develop a military strategy and operational plans. The combination of these efforts began turning the tide of the war. By 2008, violence began to decline and political progress began slowly to inch forward.

Summary of U.S. Policy Toward Iraq

The history of U.S. policy in Iraq is a sad and tragic affair. Because it viewed Iraq for many years as a bit player to be leveraged in the context of the greater Cold War struggle, the United States never took the time to understand the history, culture, and politics that combined to form a seething and unstable state. In fact, Iraq was barely a state and had no sense of national identity, only a collection of competing ethno-religious groups. After an initial failure to draw Iraq into the U.S. sphere of influence, the United States disengaged and largely ignored Iraq until a new geopolitical crisis erupted with Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979. Once Iraq became a useful tool to counter Iranian influence, the United States supported an aggressive despot with little regard for possible ramifications in the wider region. When Iraq later invaded Kuwait, in part due to this earlier American carte blanche, the United States achieved a stunning military victory but was unable to craft a satisfactory peace. This in turn set conditions for a future conflict, one in which American strategists and intelligence personnel again failed to analyze Iraq's internal sociological dynamics and plan accordingly. The United States amplified its previous mistakes with an ill-conceived policy of pre-emptive warfare and regime change that only served to destabilize the region further. On the verge of regional defeat, the United States finally began to address its strategic failings by, among other things, examining the core socio-cultural issues at play. These failings have cost

the United States copious amounts of blood and treasure. We must learn from our errors and critically examine how the United States constructs strategic policy.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The improving situation in Iraq highlights the merit of considering indigenous, sociological factors when developing strategy and operational plans. However, the revised approach to counterinsurgency is merely a first step in the right direction. The wanton violence in Iraq that peaked from 2006-2007 limited our range of strategic options. Prevention is always the preferred approach, but the multi-faceted insurgency had already taken root.

In the future, we must move beyond this reactive posture. For too long our strategy, particularly military strategy, has focused on adversary capabilities. Capabilities are important, but they are only a small sliver of what we must know to craft effective strategy. Sociological intelligence opens insight into our adversary's mindset. It provides opportunities to pressure his perceptions, attitudes, and will in a fashion that may not be possible through other means. We must utilize this insight as strategy development begins. Additionally, we must craft strategy around existing sociological realities. It is not possible to do it the other way around. Sociological factors will not adapt to meld around a strategy we crassly try to force-fit into the system.

This is not a new approach to strategy. The ancient Romans used it to enable their strategy of divide and rule. In our modern age, we too often seek to find a technological solution for every problem. Technology will assist us greatly in managing sociological information once we have it, but gleaning such information will largely rely on traditional face-to-face human contact. To gain clear insight into foreign cultures this contact will have to take place in the native language. Too many subtleties are lost in translation. Former Director of Central Intelligence, Gen (ret) Michael Hayden recognized that the structure of a given language opens new insights into, and interpretations of, how people think. He remarked, "If you don't speak the language, you're just a

tourist.”¹ Who opens up and airs their societal dirty laundry with a tourist? No one does. Who complains about the daily grind of life over lunch in the café? Virtually everyone does.

As a melting pot of cultures, America should be uniquely suited to understand different societies. Sadly, this is far from true.

Indoctrination in Americana is deep and it is only with concerted effort that we can look past the biases inherent within our own worldview. The old saw that a person who speaks two languages is called bilingual, the person who speaks three is called trilingual, and the person that only speaks one is called American is disappointingly true. As globalization brings more communities into closer contact, and the use of English spreads along with pop music and fast food, it is easy to misperceive that all contemporary states and cultures are becoming more similar.

Nothing could be further from the truth; there are enormous differences between modern states.² Despite superficial signs of a unifying world culture, “Africans are becoming more African, Asians more Asian, Russians more Russian, etc.”³ If we wish to better adapt our strategy to fit the world around us, we have fundamental changes we need to make in both the Intelligence Community and the strategy-making process.

Recommendations for Strategists

The art of strategy is the ability to mold another’s action to one’s desired ends. For the military strategist the primary tool in this art is force, but it is not the only tool available, and in many circumstances, it may not be the optimal tool for the job. Clausewitz cautions us to

¹ Gen (ret) Michael Hayden, interview with the author, 1 March 2010.

² Carnes Lord, *The Modern Prince: What Leaders Need to Know Now* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 34.

³ Angelo Codevilla, *Informing Statecraft: Intelligence for a New Century* (New York: Free Press, 1992), 238.

remember that war is the servant of policy.⁴ Any action that does not advance the policy goal is at a minimum wasteful and quite likely counterproductive. He further expounds that, “The smaller the penalty you demand from your opponent, the less you can expect him to try and deny it to you; the smaller the effort he makes, the less you need make yourself.”⁵ By extension the more closely policy can be aligned with the opponent’s self-interest, the easier it will be to bend the opponent to your will. Clausewitz also emphasizes that defeating the opponent’s military may not be enough to achieve success; ultimately, it is the opponent’s will to resist that must be broken.⁶ This certainly proved true in Iraq. The Coalition routed Saddam’s forces in short order, but the will of the populace was never broken. Even those Iraqis inclined to view the Americans and their Coalition partners as liberators soon turned on them as American administrators and soldiers proceeded to make a staggering array of serious mistakes, many of them a direct result of their failure to understand Iraq’s internal sociological dynamics. Will to resist the Coalition and will to seize power for one’s particular social group ignited an insurgency that nearly tore Iraq apart.

Unless one’s strategy is genocide, the adversary must be convinced to stop resisting. To be successful in this effort, the strategist must understand what the adversary treasures and what the adversary fears.⁷ This monograph has outlined one means to study a society’s sociological characteristics in an effort to comprehend their worldview and gain insight into their cognitive and behavioral inclinations. This requires a change in mindset to move beyond the study of weapons and tactics and enter the decidedly less clear-cut realm of social science.

⁴ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Eliot Howard and Peter Paret, trans. Michael Eliot Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 80-89.

⁵ Clausewitz, *On War*, 81.

⁶ Clausewitz, *On War*, 90.

⁷ Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 3.

The intelligence community will be a valuable asset in this endeavor, but the strategist must remember that this is an emerging field of study for the intelligence professional as well. Specifically, strategists must define their requirements as specifically as possible and provide examples of the kinds of insights they seek. They must not limit their research to the information intelligence organizations can provide. In fact, they need to branch out to other governmental agencies such as the State Department and the United States Agency for International Development, both of which are likely to have expertise valuable to a strategist's research. Finally, they should constantly seek input from academic institutions and think tanks specializing in their region of interest. If they do so, strategists will be able to share information of value with their intelligence counterparts, helping them to refine their analysis and focus them on the type of data the strategist requires.

When studying adversary societies to support strategy development, it is important to keep a few thoughts at the forefront of one's analysis. First, the adversary is never monolithic. In addition to understanding a group's worldview, it is imperative to understand how each subgroup in a society relates to and interacts with the others. From which group, or groups, does the national leadership draw support to remain in power? Who are their rivals? What factors bring them together and which factors drive them apart? If it proves impossible to craft a strategy that influences the leadership directly, is it possible to influence the leadership's support structure to direct the leadership onto a more productive path? The Romans demonstrated that such methods enabled the Republic, and later Empire, to maintain stability across its vast frontier with minimal requirements for armed force. They did so in conjunction with an army widely feared and respected, but their intelligence efforts and deep grasp of sociological and social factors combined with this to create a system of rule that was literally unbeatable for several hundred years.

Second, we must always question our baseline assumptions. When studying foreign cultures is it very easy to fall into the trap of stereotyping. Facts gathered on a small sampling of a social group may not hold true for the larger community as a whole. Strategists must take every opportunity to cross check assumptions. This includes consulting experts and taking every opportunity develop a better understanding of a social group with individuals who have personal experience living and working in that society.

Finally, we must never forget that we are trying to analyze human nature, and sort it into neat and orderly categories, even though there is nothing neat or orderly about it. We are trying to divine invisible, deeply seeded attitudes and motivations through detectable external actions. There may not always be a direct correlation between the two. Analysis will never be perfect. Strategy development must continue, despite imperfect information. As a result, no strategy should ever be contingent upon a single facet of analysis. A solid strategy will create redundant, overlapping layers of pressure against multiple friction points in the target society.

Recommendations for the Intelligence Community

As with strategists, the intelligence community requires a change in mindset regarding the importance of sociological analysis. In recent years, several organizations stood up, or expanded, to execute this type of analysis. Such analysis falls under a variety of names: human factors, human terrain, behavioral influences, strategic studies, socio-cultural analysis, etc. Despite the growth in this form of analytical effort, there are many who feel this type of fact gathering belongs outside of the intelligence community. After all, the majority of this information is open source, and freely available. The intelligence community is already over-tasked with requirements that must be actively collected through

technical, covert, or clandestine means. The intelligence community simply cannot be responsible for gathering all forms of information. While there is a modicum of truth in this argument, the intelligence community cannot afford to leave responsibility for sociological data to anyone else.

At its core, sociological information is about understanding a society at its most fundamental levels. Without a working understanding of sociological context, all-source regional analysis is impossible. The intelligence community has a vested interest in ensuring that this work is done and done well. The intelligence community prides itself on being the means to through which the United States Government can “know the enemy.” There is no better way to know the enemy than to understand the sociological dynamics that drive his society. As such, the intelligence community must volunteer to manage this type of information for the United States.

At the same time, the intelligence community cannot afford to drop current responsibilities in order to micro-manage every facet of sociological data collection. Rather, it needs to develop the means to ensure that sociological data already collected is packaged in a usable format and readily available to strategists and other consumers who need it. Overtime, producers, especially academic institutions, will need feedback to improve the quality of their product. Didactic, not to mention esoteric and verbose, prose may serve well in academic environments, but they will not serve the wider government audience well.

If the intelligence community is to take on this responsibility, the next logical question is, “Which organization will own it?” To manage this process effectively, the owner needs the authority to set policy and establish lanes in the road to ensure minimal redundancy of effort. The organization created for the express purpose of establishing policy for the intelligence community writ large is the Office of the Director of National

Intelligence (ODNI). If the ODNI is unable to execute this duty for lack of manpower or practical authority, a suitable alternative will have to be appointed. The CIA and Defense intelligence Agency (DIA) are potential options, but neither organization has the authority to set policy or task requirements across the intelligence community.

Once an office of primary responsibility for sociological intelligence is established, their first order of business must be to consolidate and centralize existing sociological information in a systematic fashion. One of the issues facing customers today is locating applicable, sociological information. It is easy to hang a product on a webpage, but that does not ensure that the customer that needs it will find it, especially in a crisis. It was previously pointed out that during Operation DESERT STORM, the CIA produced psychological profile on Saddam Hussein never reached the air campaign planners who were targeting his regime. We must impose some level of order on the chaos of the current system.

A good start would leverage current efforts to populate Intellipedia. This is a wiki designed for the intelligence community and modeled after the ubiquitous Wikipedia online encyclopedia.⁸ Wikis allows wide collaborative effort to assemble tremendous amounts of cross-referenced information quickly.⁹ Such an effort would require oversight to ensure data quality. Oversight may be as simple as appointing a designated expert to monitor assigned pages in the wiki to remove inaccurate content, and to ensure all other content remains current.

Once a method to consolidate existing sociological data is in place, we must pursue new methods for collecting such data. Since universities and other academic institutions conduct a vast amount of sociological research, they are a logical place to begin. Such institutions

⁸ Wiki: a collaborative website whose content can be edited by anyone who has access to it. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/wiki>

⁹ Cass R. Sunstein, *Infotopia: How Many Minds Produce Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 21-44,147-196.

are always seeking research grants, focused sociological research would be well worth the modest expense. Exchange programs to support sociological research and language skill development would also be money well spent. The United States also attracts a wide array of foreign students to study at American universities. These students represent a largely untapped pool of sociological knowledge. We must develop programs to leverage these potential sources of information. This is not an effort to seek clandestine sources or agents. It would merely be an effort to document sociological insight from individuals with diverse foreign backgrounds, who have also spent time in the United States and are likely to understand key facets of their cultural heritage that Americans should understand when working with their clans, tribes, or nationalities.

A final source of keen cultural insight resides with American expatriates living abroad. Americans living and working in foreign countries for long periods will be able to zero in on sociological dynamics others may miss. Their experience with the culture in their adopted homeland is likely to be both broad and deep. We must make efforts to identify and nurture a working relationship with the American expatriate community.

It should be noted that all of these potential sources will bring with them personal and cultural bias. If such sources are limited to small, insular pools, this is problematic. Alternatively, if the Intelligence Community is able to cast a wide enough net, these biases will help fill a spectrum of opinion to develop a better view of the objective whole in aggregate. Methods to accumulate and manage these large data flows will need to develop over time. Capturing an accurate cultural representation of a society or social group is not as easy task. Existing tools and processes are likely to be found wanting, but as in all intelligence disciplines improvements will naturally flow with time and experience. The important factor is to begin pursuing this valuable data.

Final Thoughts

Sociological intelligence can do much to enhance strategy development, but it will not cure all ills. As Colin Gray has aptly noted,

...cultural awareness and understanding can only be helpful, but they are not a panacea for strategic dilemmas. Even a genuine cultural expertise is not the answer, the magic key to strategic success. There are many reasons why policy and strategy can succeed or fail, and cultural empathy or blindness is only one of them. Those among us who are recent converts to culturalism, or even just to a new respect for the cultural anthropology of conflict, should hasten to reread their Clausewitz. Such factors as chance, friction, fear, the fog of war, and sheer incompetence, may well be more important in the shaping of events...¹⁰

Gray's words are exemplified by Hannibal's ultimate defeat in the Second Punic War. His superior tactical and sociological intelligence over the Romans granted him opportunity after opportunity; however, he failed to develop a final strategy that could pierce Rome's core defenses and realize a final victory. In the end, Rome's superior grand strategy and logistical might won the day, but the Romans suffered tremendously for their lack of adequate intelligence on Hannibal and his allies.

Fog and friction are ever-present factors in the implementation of any strategy. While we cannot eliminate them, we must make every effort to minimize their role. In that vein, we cannot afford to ignore any source of information that will enlighten our understanding of an adversary. For too long we have neglected sociological dynamics and the role they should play in guiding policy. Hannibal's early victories and

¹⁰ Colin S. Gray, "Out of the Wilderness: Prime Time for Strategic Culture," *Comparative Strategy* 26, no. 1 (2007): 17.

Caesar's success in Gaul demonstrate the advantage sociological intelligence can bring to strategic planning, just as the American experience in Iraq prior to 2007 make abundantly clear the disadvantages and outright perils an ignorance of such factors involves. Strategy must fit sociological conditions on the ground. If we ignore those conditions, they will not alter themselves to accommodate our strategy, and defeat will very likely be the outcome.

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